Better Writers or Better Writing?

A Qualitative Study of Second Language Writers' Experiences in a University Writing Center

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

This study explores L2 (second language) students' experience with the writing tutorial in a university writing center. University writing centers were initiated to provide writing instruction to L1 (first, native language) students and have since developed to enhance their writing ability for academic purposes. With the shift of the concept of literacy in the U.S, the focus of writing instruction in the writing center has moved from focusing on the rules of grammar and punctuation in order to "make better writing", to a collaborative pedagogy aiming to "make better writers" (North, 1984). However, as international students are increasing in the American university, their concerns for writing in English as L2 writers seem to have some conflict between the writing center's philosophy of writing instruction and the expectation that the international students have to fulfill their own needs to improve their writing ability. This study, in this light, was conducted to gain a better understanding of the work of writing centers with L2 students in terms of how the tutor and the L2 students interact with each other during the tutorial, focusing on issues and elements that inhibit the L2 students from improving their English writing ability. From the perspective of social constructionism, this study is framed by the notion of instruction as a conversational accomplishment, and learning in this view occurs as a social process mediated through interaction. With a particular focus on analyzing the talk and interaction transcribed form videoed tutorials and interviews with

tutors and tutees, this study aims to examine the nature of L2 learners' writing practices occurring in the one-to-one writing tutorials with the tutors and to provide a comprehensive vignette of experiences of L2 writers in the writing center.

Nine issues that capture the dynamics of the international students' interaction with Writing Center tutors emerged from the analysis of the corpus of data: six originate with the student as the tutee and the remaining three focus on issues that originate with the tutor. The nine issues are placed within three themes: language and culture, understanding of academic writing in English, and understanding the Writing Center's pedagogy for instruction. The issues and themes identified from the findings suggest that there is a clear gap between the tutor and the tutee in their 'Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)' of writing instruction and neither the tutor nor the tutee are positioned to easily overcome the mismatch. The gap occurs from the different expectations of writing instruction from the tutor, supported by the writing center's institutional history and philosophy and the student who comes to the Center with an established agenda based on their needs and judgments for their writing. This gap causes an inevitable tension between the quick-fix desire of the L2 clients and the long-term development philosophy of the L1 tutors. A key factor to fill the gap and to be satisfied with each other for the work of the tutorial seems to be the extent to which L2 writers are motivated to return to the writing center. When L2 learners can form an ongoing relationship with the tutor, instead of just having a one-time encounter, they may become better equipped to work with and not against the tutor. The tutor then can be positioned to understand the L2 learners' backgrounds and needs, which could possibly result in a more productive interaction and collaboration for writing instruction. This shift can begin

with a more flexible approach that makes allowances for L2 tutees to make their initial experience at a writing center positive in nature to create a suitable zone of proximal development within the tutorial. To summarize, this study was designed to seek an understanding of the nature of L2 writers' writing practices and their tutorial experiences in the university writing center. By identifying themes and issues from the analysis of the tutor-tutee interactions, interviews, and ethnographic data from the writing center, this study shed light on L2 learners' tutorial experiences and contributed to the growing body of empirical studies of L2 writer's writing practice in their talk-in-interaction during the one-to-one, face-to-face tutorials.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

"I am so stressed out with English Writing. I've considered an online editing service or a private tutor but I'm not sure if it's worth the expense. I am thinking of trying the university writing center on campus. Is there anyone who has used the service? Was it helpful to improve your writing? By, Needs Help!" (Translated from Korean into English)

This is a question posted to an internet community (http://www.gohackers.com) for the Korean students who study overseas in English speaking countries, which is mostly in the U.S. and Canada. Various questions and inquiries about their concerns regarding their new life are posted under topics ranging from school life to everyday life regarding classes, friends, professors, neighbors, and even how to deal with household chores such as dividing the trash and recyclables, paying parking tickets, etc. However, among the various inquiries, the questions that tend to draw the greatest attention are about language-related issues, specifically those regarding English writing, as they realize that writing in English is critical for academic success.

To the inquiry above seeking opinions about writing centers, several replies were posted. The responses were posted anonymously with an impromptu I.D they created

instantly when replying. Some of those replies, which were posted in Korean, are translated into English here.

- Haaak!: They don't fix problems. They just tell me what is strange. I have to fix them by myself and then have to revisit them. Did I come to the U.S. to study English?!
- Ahh Nwah: I truly agree with you. It's up to the tutor. Some tutors don't proofread and just tell me to think more and come back. I am busy… and I don't understand why they tell me to come back…I hope you meet a good tutor.
- Heogeok!: I completed 7 pages for the paper for the past 4 days and went to the writing center to get edited. Just to work for the 4 pages, 30 minutes had just gone. In the next visit, I tried to get the feedback from the fifth page but the thesis statement is in the front page and because the paper was about comparative analysis for five films, the tutor got confused to understand my paper…. So he just checked the overall grammar mistakes. I was not sure if it was well corrected or not. So I made another appointment and got correction from the first page… it took 40 minutes to go to the 6th page. I repeated the tutorial in this way over and over… the beginning part was corrected several times…(All the tutors in the writing center have different opinions…they correct the same spot over and over…) After seven visits for the paper to the writing center, I couldn't get them read over my paper. I just rewrote it by myself over and over and submitted it to the class. I feel so pathetic!

- Mmm: It was just an hour session. The crazy tutor didn't fix any problem and narrated about prepositions, articles, etc etc… then pointed to the sentence and said that those types of mistakes are not acceptable…then told me to think about what's wrong. Are they idiots? Isn't that why I went there because I don't know what's wrong? God. I got so pissed off. I paid high and found a private tutor. Don't go to writing center. Rather take something like writing class.
- Well2: I don't know if this is just my school. Since when I don't remember, I began not going to the writing center. The kids in writing center have no knowledge about my paper but despite that, it is so noticeable that they don't want to be revealed that they don't understand my paper. So I thought it would be enough if they can check whether the grammar and sentences are awkward at least. But the problem is that they don't point out every problem and say that it is their policy. They point to one or two prepositions or articles and bring the handout about how to use articles and try to teach me "use 'a' in this way… use 'the' in that way"… then tell me to search the rest and fix them by myself.
- hhh: I work by myself as well… and then ask to other international students if there is any part that she can't understand. Or I just do it by myself! I used to go to the writing center but it took 30 minutes to work on just half page… So I don't go there anymore.

A recurring theme across these replies is frustration: they point out issues about the writing center tutorials that the students do not find helpful, such as proofreading,

time limitations, mistrust of the tutor's expertise, their instructional styles, etc. They complain that they would rather work by themselves, ask their friends for help, or find a private tutor (if they can afford the expense). Relatively fewer in number among other replies not shown here are positive comments from those who were satisfied with the service they received from the Center. One shared her experience that the tutors were really helpful to work with regarding grammar and making the sentences run smooth through very friendly discussions. After working several times with several tutors, she became friends with them and hung out with them outside of the Center. Another shared his/her tips for the tutorial "Take notes of all the suggestions that the tutor makes about the problems of your sentences and study them later for your future writing. They are very helpful. By, Lucky."

Collectively, these postings suggest that international students are aware of and react strongly, one way or another (usually negatively), to writing centers and the services they provide. They want those services and have very definite expectations for how they should be provided. Given the common presence of writing centers at American universities and the large numbers of international students utilizing them, these views about writing centers are worth noting.

A writing center is an authorized institution for providing support for students and often for researching writing instruction. Writing centers have played a significant role in American university education for the past few decades, especially as concern has arisen about students' ability to write well for academic purposes. They began to appear in the United States in the 1960s as English Department "writing labs" (North, 1984) and have since evolved into what Thonus (2002, p. 111) calls "a sophisticated service" supporting

students' needs for writing across the curriculum through one-to-one conferences guided by trained tutors. Thonus (1998, p. 32) says of these tutors that they "concentrate on broadly constituted principles such as 'good writing' rather than institutional-, discipline-, or course-specific rules. They must remain neutral with respect to 'higher' rules and are forbidden from evaluating assignments posed by students' instructors or from hazarding a guess as to ultimate evaluations of student writing." Their core job is to help students become better writers as opposed to simply 'fixing problems' in a specific essay.

Writing centers have provided language and literacy instruction for native speakers (L1) of English and also a context for second language acquisition for nonnative (L2) speakers by providing a site for academic writing instruction outside of the formal curriculum. However, as was shown in the various comments that the Korean international students expressed about the work of the writing center, there appear to be some issues that need to be addressed. Whether these are mainly incorrect student perceptions that need to be changed or genuine problems that need to be solved, or a combination of the two, there is clearly a need to better understand the work of writing centers as it relates to second language (L2) students. That is what this dissertation sought to do.

More specifically, this study investigated how L2 (i.e., international) students interact with writing center tutors as well as how the tutors interact with those students. Also, this study examined the nature of the L2 learners' writing practices, specifically with a focus on the issues and elements that inhibit these students from improving their English writing ability, what difficulties the tutors and the tutees experience in their writing instruction interaction, what helps the second language students to improve their

writing ability, what the writing center does to fulfill the second language students' needs as academic writers in English, and to what extent its work with the L2 students aligns with the philosophies that guide writing center practices. These are issues that have attracted the interest of L1 and L2 writing scholars since the 1990s.

With a particular focus on analyzing the talk and interaction transcribed from videoed tutorials and interviews with tutors and tutees, this study investigated the writing instruction enacted during the tutorials and how the L2 students worked with the tutors in the writing center, particularly the issues and elements that prevent the L2 learners from receiving the full repertoire of assistance they seek for their writing. Here the study attempted to fill an important gap in the writing center scholarship, which has historically focused on the experiences of L1 writers, while L2 scholarship in this area has not formed a comprehensive picture of the experiences of L2 writers.

The rest of this chapter identifies the research problems and questions that guided the study along with its theoretical framework, which operated from the perspective of Social Constructionism. Chapter 2 provides a review of related research about the pedagogical philosophy and the discourse of the writing center, L2 students in university writing centers, and second language reading and writing development. Chapter 3 describes the methodologies employed in this research. The procedures used for data collection and analysis as well as the corpus of data are also provided. The study's findings are presented in Chapter 4, while Chapter 5 places them in perspective and looks at what the study has contributed to the field.

Research Problem

Interest in L2 writers in the United States began in the 1950s, as the number of overseas students studying in the U.S. began to increase. This was when the first writing courses designed specifically for L2 writers began to appear, principally at the University of Michigan as well as a few other American universities (Matsuda, 2001). This led, in the next two decades, to the first research on L2 writing issues, especially in the context of writing courses offered through newly emerging English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and courses offered in English departments. As the number of international students in U.S. universities continued to grow, writing centers began to receive L2 writers as clients. Currently, more than half of those who visit the writing center are L2 students. However, research on these students and their writing center experiences has not kept pace with the growth of their writing center participation.

International students' interest in writing centers is motivated by their recognition of the need to be effective academic writers and a subsequent need to improve the quality of their writing, as well as the one-to-one, face-to-face writing tutorial that the writing center provides. This kind of interaction is attractive to the international students as a means to improve both their English writing and speaking ability in a more intimate atmosphere. In a classroom setting, few such opportunities exist for individual attention and intensive practice in English, and participation in whole class discussions can be intimidating in view of the students' often low self-rating of their spoken English proficiency. However, despite their need and desire for instruction and one-to-one interaction, anecdotal evidence and some previous research indicates that there seems to be dissonance in the work of the writing tutorials that the international students receive

from the writing center. In particular, there may be a poor alignment between what the students want and expect and what, philosophically, a writing center is prepared to provide. However, the nature of that dissonance is not clear, and with international students constituting such a significant portion of the writing center clientele, there is a need to better understand what actually happens in tutorial interaction involving L2 students.

In response to this need, this study investigated possible causes of the dissonance in the writing tutorials between the international students and the tutors in the writing center, and what factors impact on the apparent lack of success of these tutorials. In this regard, this study explored the tutorials themselves, mainly from the students' perspective, but also, to a lesser extent, the vantage point of the tutors, who tend to be native speakers of English as well as students themselves. The study thus examined the dynamics of these tutorial interactions, and it identified nine issues that are of particular importance in what takes place between the tutors and the tutees. In doing so, it sought to contribute to both the writing center scholarship and the scholarship that focuses on L2 writers.

Research Questions

In order to investigate the issues and elements that impact on the international students' attempts to receive assistance from the writing center, the specific research questions generated were categorized into three themes: differences in language and culture, differences in understanding of academic writing in English, and differences in understanding the writing center's pedagogy.

Differences in language and culture:

1. What are the likely difficulties for L2 learners in working with the tutors in the tutorial? Does their English proficiency interfere with the work of the tutorial?
2. Are there any issues involved in the L2 learner's affective domain while participating in the tutorial?
3. Are there any cross-cultural issues involved in interacting with the tutors during the tutorial that might lead to misunderstandings and/or miscommunication?

Differences in understanding of academic writing in English:

4. Does the students' L2 writing proficiency become an issue that interferes with the work of the tutorial?
5. Do differences between the rhetorical conventions of English academic writing and students' L1 writing interfere with the international students' participation in the tutorial?
6. Do the culturally-mediated speaking styles and/or attitudes of the tutors become an issue that interferes with the work of the tutorial in light of differences in the students' speaking style and/or attitudes and expectations?

Differences in understanding the philosophy of the writing center and its pedagogy for instruction:

7. Is there any discrepancy in understanding "proofreading" from the international students' perspective and that of the writing center's philosophy or policies (and thus its tutors)?
8. Is there an issue of mistrust on the part of the international students regarding the tutors' expertise with respect to providing meaningful writing instruction?
9. What does the international student expect from the tutorial that can improve their writing? Are there any differences between the tutors' and the students' expectations regarding what should take place during tutorials?

These research questions provided guidance in qualitatively analyzing the study's data and in identifying the issues and elements that impact on what actually occurs during tutorials as well as reactions to the tutorials.

Theoretical Framing

The primary framing for the study was the notion of instruction as a conversational accomplishment from the perspective of Social Constructionism (i.e., Vygotsky's constructivist theory).

Learning and Social Interaction

Learning has been discussed by many scholars with an emphasis on the learner being actively engaged in the learning process. By being actively involved and using their current knowledge and experiences as scaffolds, learners construct knowledge through interpersonal and intrapersonal processes. Instead of knowledge being transmitted simply as a result of an activity itself, learning within this framework is viewed as being

mediated by the individual's engagement and participation in situated social practices, that is, the context in which learning takes place. Learning cannot be separated from that context. Learning in this view occurs as a social process mediated through interaction (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsksy (1978) saw learning as a social process that happens when two or more people work to achieve a goal by interacting with each other. In his view, what was of particular importance was what he called the *zone of proximal development*, which he defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978). The level of potential development is the level that the learner achieves from guidance that a teacher or more competent individual provides for instruction. With the guidance of adults, or in collaborative interaction with an expert, they do the tasks that are too difficult for an individual to master alone and begin to master the tasks (Vygotsky, 1986). Learning in this way occurs in the zone of proximal development through interaction with more knowledgeable experts. Thus, learning is not just about accumulation of new knowledge being assimilated or accommodated by learners; it is a process that the learners integrate into new knowledge by actively contributing to the construction of the knowledge community. As a result, human cognitive development is essentially socially constructed, and knowledge is not just constructed, it is co-constructed through the social practice that is mediated through meaningful negotiation by the members of the community.

Learning through Interaction: Learner's Prior Knowledge

Vygotsky's views highlight the importance of interaction between the learner and the experts mediated as assistance and guidance (interpersonal) and also the interaction that comprises the learner's prior knowledge and the new knowledge (intrapersonal) in their potential developmental level.

The interaction between experts and novices creates the zone of proximal development, and learning takes place through guided participation (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Children engage in the social and cultural activities where adults guide, model and provide assistance to them to perform the cultural practices as more competent members of the community. Guided participation allows novices ("newcomers") to become experts ("oldtimers") through "legitimate peripheral participation" in the various social activities and cultural practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As novices become more competent as independent experts, they re-construct the knowledge of the community that they co-constructed. Competence as experts occurs through the interaction between the social and cultural practices and the individual's active involvement in them. In order to understand how guided participation can promote learning and development in the zones of proximal development, Bruner (1983) discussed the central role of scaffolding within guided participation that occurs in various socio-cultural settings. Scaffolding in guided participation is a process that is co-constructed where novices and experts actively contribute to achieve their shared goal of their activities.

Regarding the intrapersonal interaction that occurs between the learner's prior knowledge and the new knowledge in their learning and development, the diversity in a

learner's prior knowledge and experience becomes a great resource for meaning making in their learning environment (Teasley, 1995). Since not all interaction leads to reaching their goal for instruction, the quality of learning in small groups is strongly related to the quality of interaction and collaboration that the learners engage in during academic tasks (Fisher, 1993; Mercer, 1996; Webb, Troper & Fall, 1995). In order to make the interaction effective for learning, it is important that the participants have a shared understanding of the task and goals (Rogoff, 1990). Based on the course of shared history between the participants (Mercer, 1995), learners appreciate the purpose of the tasks, share tools and activities, and produce the task successfully as a joint activity. This dynamic of collaboration and joint understanding does not occur automatically. It is closely related to the participants' socio-cultural knowledge as well as their interpretation and perception of the aims of the activities. In order to achieve a shared understanding of the activity, the negotiation of the participant's social and cultural knowledge with the contexts is inevitable (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

Instruction through Knowledge Construction

Through the interaction mediated by cultural practices, particularly with language, the meaning is negotiated across an increasing intersubjectivity while working in the zone of proximal development (Rogoff, 1990). Language mediated in interaction, which is a discourse in social interactions in various educational settings, is important in the effort to understand the guided construction of knowledge (Mercer, 1995) in terms of how the participants engage the social construction of knowledge and recreate the culture that promotes learning.

As the scholarly literature has shown, learning takes place through guided participation and the discursive interaction and practices between the experts and novices. In this light, how the discourse in their interaction takes place in the instructional environment in educational contexts, which is the zone of proximal development, is intriguing to investigate. In particular, in the context of this study, the interaction between expert-novice, instructor-student, and tutors-tutees, and the discourse in their instruction is essential to understand the dynamics of learning and teaching through interaction.

In other words, the notion of knowledge as socially constructed within a particular context of communication and learning was central to understanding what takes place between novices (tutees) and experts (tutors) from different linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural backgrounds. The tutors and tutees started from seemingly different places in their social construction of knowledge about writing within the confines of one-to-one tutorial interaction that was also shaped by the writing center philosophies and policies that play an overarching role in guiding that interaction. By viewing these interactions through a social constructivist lens, the study was better equipped to discern what took place during the tutorials from both the tutors' and tutees' vantage points.

Definitions of Key Terms

Academic writing: Academic writing in this study refers to college level English writing that international students find difficult to work with due to differences in cultural practices, differences in rhetorical patterns, and even differences in logical processes. In this regard, academic writing for international students is more complex not only due to

linguistic problems but also to cultural differences and conventions in which they are not quite competent yet.

International students (L2 students, L2 learners, and L2 tutees): International students in this study (borrowed from the definition from Ferris, 2009) refers to non-native, English speaking, students who were born, raised and educated in another country and who come temporarily to the U.S. with a foreign student visa for a short-term educational or training program with the stated intent to return to the home country when the program is completed. The terms international students, L2 students, L2 learners, and L2 tutees were used interchangeably.

Better writer vs. Better writing: These terms were first introduced by Stephen North (1984) and used prevalently in the Writing Center literature. From the view of writing as a process, North (1984) argued that the writing curricula in the writing center needs to be student-centered. In this sense, he argued, "in a writing center the object is to make sure that *writers*, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction." (p. 438) In this, he claimed the axiom of the writing instruction in a writing center as: "Our job is to produce better writers, not better writing."(p.438) Writing center in this sense takes their interest to the writers and the occasion where they address their primary concern about their particular project or particular text as a process by which it is produced, rather than to the text by itself for their writing instruction.

Collaboration: The term collaboration in this study is based on the discussion of Andrea Lunsford (1991). Lunsford argued that collaboration in its theory and practice begins from the epistemological shift, which is a shift in the way we view the knowledge from viewing "knowledge and reality as exterior or outside of us, as immediately accessible,

individually knowable, measurable, and shareable to viewing knowledge as mediated by or constructed through language in social use, as socially constructed and contextualized, as, in short, the product of collaboration"(p.93). A writing center in this context puts the emphasis of control, power, and authority, not in the tutor or staff, not even in the individual student, but in the negotiating group that engages students in the dynamics of their work not as a receptive listener or follower but as an actively participating, cooperating, and constructing agent.

No Proofreading Policy: No proofreading is a major policy that the Writing Center declares as the work that they do not provide. Students are encouraged to be aware of the policy before scheduling an appointment. Quoted from their webpage: *"The Writing Center does not proofread. We will discuss grammar issues with you and give you advice on how to proofread your own work, but we will not give you a proofed draft."* The no proofreading policy is based on the Writing Center's philosophy of writing instruction that is supported by the discussions of North (1984) and Lunsford (1991).

Limitations

The international students introduced in this study were those who were admitted to the university in part through an acceptable score on a standardized English test (Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL). However, as many of them learned English in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment, where their exposure to English was usually limited to the classroom (as opposed to a more linguistically rich ESL environment), their proficiency in speaking and writing varied individually depending on the length of their stay in the U.S. or their previous experience in English

speaking countries. However, since this study sought to more broadly identify and understand the issues that impact on L2 students' efforts to receive help from the writing center, individual differences among the student participants were not considered as a significant variable in this study. Also, the tutors who participated in this study were all domestic, native English speaking students who were not familiar with the foreign culture of the students, particularly the East Asian languages and rhetorics. The individual differences of the tutors in terms of their previous experiences with foreign language and culture were not considered specifically.

My positioning as a non-native English writer, though I contributed to the work of analyzing the L2 writers' interaction about writing tutorials, might have worked differently if the study was conducted by a different researcher. Also, this study was aimed at focusing only on L2 writers to study their interaction during the tutorials; however, investigating L1 writers' interaction during their writing tutorials for comparison would also be interesting to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of the writing instruction of a university writing center.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing Center Discourse and Philosophy

Misperception of the Work of the Writing Center

Since writing centers first appeared as an associated organization of English departments in the 1930s (Kim, 2000), their work has been constantly re-formulated, discussed and disputed by tutors, faculty, administrators, and researchers. With the shift of the literacy education, the writing center has shifted its focus from a remediation service provided to students who are deficient in their writing ability to a broader range of academic services for students, faculty, and staff across departments. (Kim, 2000, Thonus, 2002) In contemporary university contexts, writing centers provide campus-wide services for writing instruction for students, faculty and administrators, and also outreach literacy programs off campus.

However, despite the significant role that writing centers have played in the last 50 years, their work has often been stereotyped as a remedial 'fix-it shop' that focuses only on things such as grammar and punctuation for those students for whom the expectations of academic writing were least familiar (Wallace, 1991). Since Moore (1950) referred to the writing center as a "remedial agency for removing students'

deficiencies in composition" the idea of a writing center has been treated as a first aid, fix-it service center, in the service of academic departments, rather than solving the problem of the writing as an independent organization for teaching and learning (Walvoord, 1981; Hairston, 1982; Hayward, 1983; North, 1984). These characterizations represent the prevalent misconception about the work of the writing centers.

The Writing Center Produces Better Writers, Not Better Writing

Opposing the view of the writing center as a fix-it-shop, North (1984) argued that writing centers are based on a view of "writing as a process" and the object of the writing center is not necessarily the text of the student writing, rather it should be the writers. He argued that the job of "the writing center is to produce better writers, not better writing." (North, 1984, p. 438) He described the relationship between tutors and the composing process as holistically devoted to a "participant-observer methodology." Citing Paul Diesing's *Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences* (1971), North describes *Holism* not as an a priori belief that everything is related to everything else, but as the methodological necessity of pushing on to new aspects and new kinds of evidence in order to make sense of what one has already observed and to test the validity of one's interpretations. (p.167, ibid, p.439) He defines a tutor as a participant-observer who tries to fit into the ordinarily solo ritual of writing, who sees what happens during the "ritual" and tries to make sense of it, observes some more and revises the writing from the view of the writers. In this sense, the only composing process that the writing center is interested in is one, which entirely belongs to the writer. The center's loyalties are thus not to normative standards of 'correctness', but to the writer's expressive aims.

North also contrasted the "old center instruction" that occurs *after or apart* from the writing, and which focuses on the correction of textual problems, with the "new center instruction" that occurs *during* the writing, and which focuses on the writing activity itself. He asserted that tutors must measure their success by the changes in the writer, not by the changes in the text they create. Tutors are engaged in the "ritual" of composing by observing, interfering, and participating in ways that allow the writer to talk about their writing with those who are willing to listen to and know how to talk about their writing. North (1984) thus opposed the idea that the writing process can be divided into editing and invention. He claimed that the writing center existed to talk to writers about their work, as Socrates exemplified in Athens long ago, not to serve or supplement any external curriculum.

Writing as a Socially Negotiated Collaborative Process

Another seminal idea in the developing theories and discourses of the writing center is the concept of *collaboration,* which is based in a social constructivist reading. Lunsford (1991) discusses collaboration with respect to a shift in the view of knowledge and reality from measurable, immediately accessible, and exterior things, to mediated, contextualized and socially constructed through language. She developed three models for a writing center in terms of our view of knowledge. *The Center as Storehouse* sees knowledge as exterior to us, directly accessible and conveyable to the learners. *The Center as Garret* sees knowledge as an internalized, individually derived interior voice. Tutors in this model try to help students reach their unique inner voice and power. The collaboration model that Lunsford (1991) formulated is based neither on positivist knowledge principles (*The Storehouse model*), nor on Platonic ideals (*The Garret model*),

but rather from the concept that knowledge is contextually tied and socially constructed (*The Burkean Parlor*, for Lunsford). Having borrowed Hannah Anrendt's insight that, "For excellence, the presence of others is always required" (cited from Lunsford, 1991), Lunsford argues that collaboration in the writing center should be the primary principle that is supported, not only in solving problems, but also in finding problems as well; working as a group but also monitoring and evaluating the theory of how the groups work; and understanding and valuing collaboration toward consensus but valuing dissensus and diversity as well. Lunsford (1991) in this way, integrated writing instruction to include reading, talking, writing, and thinking through tutorials, and broadened the tutor's work to beyond fixing problems.

As stated, the idea of writing centers informed a theory of knowledge as socially constructed, of power and control as constantly negotiated and shared. In her notion of collaboration, knowing occurs with other people through the process of making and remaking the knowledge, which is a collaborative recreating process of sense-making. If knowledge is contextually bound and socially constructed, it is not conveyed as an isolated entity outside of the encounters of tutors and tutees. The knowledge is recreated by negotiating with other people through a collaborative re-creating process. In this way, the writing center aims to produce better writers, not better writing.

Instruction through Conversation with Writers

Writing instruction is an intervention in the composing. The competent tutor knows how to talk about writing. According to North (1982), their questioning starts from the view of the writer's concern, such as "How are you going to get from here to

here?" instead of saying, "Here's how you get from here to here." (p.436). The tutor's job, according to North and Lunsford, is mostly about the writer, not the text.

Thus, success in tutoring does not mean an immediate improvement in a particular text. Tutors are listeners and readers who are trained to provide responses for the writers to keep writing. Their main responsibility is to influence the writer to improve the writing by being inspired by the tutor. At the end of the tutorials, it is expected to see the writer being changed into someone who has a new eye of seeing and thinking about their own writing. What the tutor is working on is not the writing itself but on the writers through conversation. Text in this sense is just a medium that makes the conversation between tutors and writers possible. In this regard, North argued that tutors and writers need to be trained to see an individual piece of writing as a point on a continuum in order to be a better writer (North, 1982, p.436).

The institutional history of writing centers is thus a cultural history too, organized by efforts to write new purposes, resist prior conceptions and stereotypes, and redefine the literacy, writing, and the work of these centers. As an example of this kind of cultural work, Whitted (1966) characterized the students who come to the writing center as "not someone who fails to meet a mythical arbitrary standard of excellence, but is a non-member of an in-group with respect to communication in an academic context" (p.40). This account is not simply a re-casting of who the students are, but a way of redefining the work and the role of the writing center. She broadened the concept of tutees from those who are deficient to those who are a non-member in the academic context. In this way, Whitted redefined the scope and character of the work of writing center as an independent gate-keeping institution for those students who are not familiar with the

academic literacy, not as students who 'fail' to meet a certain mythical standard. A tutorial in the Writing Center in this sense is transformed to a form of pedagogy as culturally integrated, collaborative instruction.

University Writing Tutorials and International Students

As part of this shifting emphasis from writing as an individual cognitive exercise to writing as a cultural practice, previous literature have been investigated from the linguistic features of the tutorials to the relationship between tutors and clients in terms of gender, ethnicity, SES, motivation, language proficiency, etc. (Young, 1992; Thonus, 1998; Ritter, 2002). These studies aim to measure the effectiveness of tutorials in terms of the rhetorical style of a student's writing and attempt to define a 'successful' writing tutorial (Thonus, 1998). Some do so via discourse analyses with respect to authority, power, and ideology. (Thonus, 1998; Ritter, 2002)

L2 Writers' Learning Experiences and English Proficiency

From the revealing features that the L2 writer brings with the oral and written language, the work that the L1 tutor focuses on to work for the tutorial easily moves toward the grammar issue. Williams (2008) claimed that writing center tutors do not necessarily have the explicit knowledge of the rules of English grammar because they learned English grammar ingrained when they acquired their native language. This could be problematic with the work of L2 writers who seek help and an explicit explanation of their grammar mistakes.

Also, many L2 writers who are from different educational system, in which teachers are the unquestioned authority, have a tendency to think of tutors as an authority. L2 tutees relied on the tutor with more questions than L1 tutees, and when they received any suggestions from the tutor, they became very receptive, rather than disagreeing with the tutor (Thonus, 1998, 2001; Kim, 2009). L2 writer's expectations to think of the tutor as an authority can cause dissatisfaction with the tutor whereas not with L1 tutees when their expectations were not fulfilled (Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1991). L2 tutees request more help from the tutors and expect to receive answers for all of their concerns of writing. So when they find their requests are not fulfilled, or even rejected, they are more dissatisfied with the tutorial session.

Moser (1993) conducted a study about the university tutoring experience of ESL, Haitian undergraduate students. They came to the Center for a tutorial a few times in the beginning of the semester but did not return after that. What she found as the reason for why they did not come back was that, from the tutor's view, the students were too passive, silent and difficult to understand their spoken English. The tutor ended up just making "fixes" to their paper, which made them frustrated. The students reported that they did not find the tutor as "knowledgeable" as their instructors and did not find the tutorial helpful for their writing. In this study, both the tutor and the tutees seemed to have different expectations of the work of the tutorial and neither seemed to be satisfied by the work they did. Learners' cultural backgrounds and experiences have a significant influence on their learning styles (Hyland, 1994). In addition to the barrier of different languages and cultural backgrounds, different expectations of the work of the tutorial become the obstacle for communication in their interaction during the tutorial.

Regarding language proficiency and their preference for the writing conference program, Eckstein (2013) conducted a study that evaluates L2 writer's preference for the one-to-one writing conference program. Teacher responded about the benefit of the classroom-based writing conference program, which includes the individualized writing conference that deals with the problems of each student's writing concerns. The students' responses, however, varied with their language proficiency. Lower-proficiency learners preferred the local concerns of their writing and less collaborative interaction; more proficient learners preferred global feedback with more collaborative interaction. Teacher also structured their feedback and interactional style based on the student's proficiency level. This study indicates that a learner's L2 proficiency is a significant element for writing instruction, not only for their interactional styles but also for to the feedback preferences. In this regard, Oxford (2001) stated that with the absence of the knowledge of an L2 student's accurate proficiency and their preference of learning strategy, the instructor cannot provide systematically organized, needed instruction for the student. They need to be prepared to learn more about the L2 student's level of language and their learning strategy.

As shown, L2 tutee's learning experience and their language proficiency has a significant influence on their interaction with the writing instruction as it is connected to the plausibility of their writing improvement. When they encounter the dissonance from the problem of cross-cultural miscommunications and the mismatched expectations of the work of the instruction, both the L1 tutor and the L2 tutees experience dissatisfaction and frustration with the work of the tutorial and it becomes a serious hindrance for writing improvement.

Remediated-focused vs. Collaborative-focused

Cumming and So (1996) found that the cooperative effort "procedural facilitation" of the writing process between the tutor and the L2 tutee during a one-to-one tutorial session is helpful to solve the problems of draft composition and revisions. Instead of being directive to the problems of the text, they found that modelling specific procedures of thinking while composing and revising their texts were more effective for their writing process. On the other hand, Blau, Hall and Strauss (1998) advocated the directive approach in their linguistic analysis of the conversation between tutor and tutee. They criticized that the emphasis on the collaborative approach resulted in tutorials that seemed to be a waste time and lacked clear direction. They insisted that collaboration in tutorials has to be used judiciously and appropriately (p.38).

Being directive versus nondirective relates to the interactional styles of the writing instruction, 'remediation-focused versus collaboration-focused'. The disputes of writing instruction with the error-correction conventions lead the discussion to the proofreading issue, which is one of the main topics that is constantly debated for its way and effectiveness.

Cogie, Strain and Lorinskas (1999) described the demand of ESL students' for proofreading and suggested ways for the tutor to avoid the request by instructing self-editing strategies, such as use of a learner's dictionary, minimal marking, and using error logs etc. Myers (2003) later contradicted this study by claiming that what "English grammar means to a native speaker of English, even one who grows up with a dialect of English unused in formal instruction, is very different from what it means to a second-language learner. The need to learn the many complex ways a language determines,

subordinates, coordinates, lexicalizes and so on are often demeaned in composition literature (p.56).” She insisted language structure cannot be separated from culture, and errors in vocabulary and syntax, sentence-level features occur in the structural constraints of a language and they constitute culture as the other features of language beyond the sentence-level features, such as rhetorical or global organization issues. Quoting Cogie, et al (1999)’, concerning the tutor as a cultural informant, which is endorsed by Powers and Nelson (1995), Myers argued, “Being a cultural informant (as a tutor that enables the members of a different culture to express themselves in a new culture) includes being a language informant (p.56).” Myers (2003) argued that Cogie’s et al self-editing strategies are designed for English-native-speaker students who have ‘ears’ to hear their own mistakes. It is unrealistic to expect that the ESL students can follow self-editing strategies. ESL students very often are aware of their mistakes but they simply do not know how to fix them. Harris and Silva (1993) also pointed out the necessity of “some recourse to more mechanical rule-based proofreading strategies or outside help, such as a native speaker reader (p.535)”.

Myers (2003) insisted that the tutors of the writing center should be aware of the complexity of second language writing and be equipped and trained with the pedagogical grammar of English as a second language and language acquisition process.

Talk-in-Interaction with L2 Writers during the Tutorials

Various issues occurring in the interaction during the tutorial between L1 and L2 tutees are closely intertwined with the tutee’s socio-cultural knowledge: language proficiency, pragmatic knowledge, perception of the tutor and the work of the tutorial,

participation and engagement for collaboration, and the different expectations of the work of the tutorial. They have been investigated as a primary interest for L2 student's work of the tutorial.

Young (1992) analyzed talk and interaction between native and non-native speaker tutees and native speaker tutors with a focus on the tutees' perception of the tutor talk in their cultural preference and found a difference in non-native speaking tutee's perception and interaction with the tutor. Regarding the issue of politeness and different cultural background, the strategy of using politeness to mitigate face-threatening situations, such as criticism of the tutee's writing during the tutorial can cause a barrier for the non-native speaking tutee to understand the tutor. The tutor is in a dilemma between being direct or indirect to make clear the criticism or not to offend the tutees in their work. Thonus (1998) also discussed the communication between native English-speaking (NS) tutors and the non-native speaker (NNS) tutees with the focus being on the conflicts occurring during the tutorial between effectiveness in communication and instruction technique. She analyzed the tutorial with the five categorical themes of questioning strategies, balance of interlocutor participation, comprehensibility of the interactions, coherence, and politeness and found that the conflicts between effectiveness, comprehensibility and politeness are common. During the interaction in tutorials with NNS tutees, the tutor is in a dilemma in that pursuing effectively the tasks of the tutorial by being indirect may not be comprehensible to the tutees; and that pursuing the tasks of the tutorial by being direct and more comprehensible may be impolite or offensive to the tutees.

More specifically, Bell & Youmans (2006) discussed the politeness strategy that occurs through text-based rhetorical praise statement (such as "You have lots of great ideas here") in a way to bridge the critique for the writing. NS tutees understand the initiating phrase as a discursive moment and expect to hear the "however" or "although", but the NNS tutees get confused following suggestions to change the writing after the initial praise statement.

Concerning the talk-in-interaction during the tutorial, Thonus (1999) investigated tutor "dominance" in academic writing tutorials in terms of gender, student language proficiency, and their interactions. She focused on the differences between NS/NNS tutor/tutee interaction and categorized the features of the tutorials and discussed how different their interactions in the writing tutorials were. She tried to interpret their difference through power, ideology and linguistic analysis. Kim (2000) also investigated the interaction between tutors and tutees in terms of the gap between the frames that tutors and tutees have. The focus of her study was the *volubility*[1] of tutors and tutees, and the type of questions tutors ask tutees in order to examine how the collaboration occurred. She found that the general frame of writing center tutorials in actual practice was more asymmetrical, or less collaborative, than the collaborative frame defined in the prevailing theory that is based on social constructivism. Furthermore, the tutors seemed to have a more asymmetrical relationship with the NNS students than with the NS students, and the NNS student sessions tended to be less collaborative. Frequently, the tutors were more didactic and in control of the tutorials. According to the volubility and

[1] Amount of talk

the question type, she tried to discuss the different perceptions of the *frame*[2] and to measure how their relations were displayed, finding that the relations between NS and NNS were asymmetrical.

Ritter (2002) also investigated the interaction between ESL learners and NS writing center tutors and found patterns of tutorial interactions in the writing center and their correlation with learning opportunities as well as the role of social process and practice in the tutorials. With conversation analysis (CA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) as methods for interpretation, she found that the ESL learner and tutor oriented to the participant identities, tasks, and goals of the writing center, which refers to an institutional talk. For the ESL learners, the tutorials provide a learning opportunity for doing conversation, rather than a writing–revision process in the writing center. The tutor's background and experience strongly affect the tutees and the tutoring practices. ESL students posed a problem for some tutors because of the language, level and/or subject area of their writing assignments. Considering the theory of Writing Center and second language acquisition research, she suggested the need of re-conceptualizing the NNS tutorial guide to maximize their learning opportunities and the mutual relationship.

[2] Bateson's concept of "frame" gets its theoretical complexity in Goffman's notion of *frame* in *Frame Analysis* (1974), which is one of the common reference points in the study of discourse analysis. According to Goffman, a *frame* consists of "principles of organization which govern social events and our subjective involvement in them." (1974, pp. 10-11) and through frames, people structure experience and identify and define social interactions in order to participate and maintain involvement in them. Shiffirin (1996) defines a frame as an "interactional order underlying social occasions, situations, and encounters. Tannen (1984) defined a frame as "a superordinate message about how the communication is intended" (p.23) (cited from Kim, 2000)

Thonus (2002) later attempted to characterize successful writing tutorials by analyzing features such as topic introduction, type and frequency of directives and their mitigation, volubility, overlaps, backchannels, and laugher. She described the symmetry of tutor and tutees' perceptions in their conversational behavior as "successful". Lack of symmetry was interpreted as conversational difficulty. Low rates of volubility, overlap, backchannels, and laugher were indicated as low involvement in their interactions, and this low involvement was interpreted as correlation with less mutual satisfaction with their interactions. Thonus (2004) continued to examine the interaction and conversational behavior of NNS tutee and NS tutor. As Kim (2000) called the difference between NNS and NS tutees in their expectation of the tutorials, Thonus also found significant differences such as, shorter time of turn length, less mitigation, less extended negotiation sequences, etc. in their interactions. She suggested the necessity and effectiveness of directive approach for the NNS tutees, rather than a *Socratic approach* (North, 1984).

Regarding the tutoring for revision for L2 tutees, Williams (2004) suggested that small-scale revisions of sentence-level problems is necessary to make the connection between the tutorial and revisions, and pointed to the effectiveness of working with L2 tutees more explicitly rather than indirectly. She urged the tutors to be aware that the L2 tutee's lack of response is more likely either resistance to the suggestion or lack of understanding. Bell and Elledge (2008) studied the linguistic dominance of the tutorials between L1 tutors and L2 tutees through time-at-talk, turn taking, agenda setting and the content analysis. They found that both the tutors and tutees alternate collaboratively between the linguistic dominant position in their interaction; however, they experience

dissonance in agenda-setting in that the L2 tutees desired to focus on working on surface features, which is proofreading, instead of working on global concerns for revision.

Instructional Conversations and Students Learning to Write at the College Level

Writing in L2 for Academic Purpose

The ability to write is acquired from constant practice and effort from the formal instructional environment. It is not naturally acquired ability. It develops from learning through experience. Writing involves composing information as description and also transforming it into new texts for argument or persuasion. It requires complex problem-solving skills that include linguistic and cognitive ability. No doubt it becomes challenging for second language learners to acquire writing proficiency as well as writing strategies, techniques etc.

Second language writing research has developed from L1 research as a base. However, considering the various educational, social and cultural experiences that L2 students bring from their native language and culture including the rhetorical and cultural differences in organizing text and structuring arguments (referred to as "contrastive rhetoric") (Connor, 1997; Leki, 1993), the difficulty that L2 writers encounter is different from L1 writers and this difference causes structural errors including textual and rhetorical problems. Hyland (2003) in this issue of L2 writing, discussed, since L2 writer's language and rhetorical skills may not fully transfer to the target language, that L2 writers carry the burden of learning to how to write, and learning the target language, English at the same time. Hinkel (2004) also stated that academic writing in a second language requires advanced linguistic foundation with sufficient grammar and lexical

knowledge. L2 writing in this way involves cognitively challenging work for the L2 writers to produce meaningful text in a second language. This circumstance requires that the L2 writers receive more guidance and assistance from the instructor, especially at the revision stage for their writing.

Academic writing is cognitively demanding for L2 writers. Anderson (1985) proposed a model of language production in second language speaking and writing, which was divided into three stages: construction, where the writer makes a plan about what he/she is going to speak or write; transformation where the writer transforms his/her intended meaning into form (utterance or text); and execution, which is the physical process of producing text or utterance. In order to structure the information, the writer requires diverse knowledge, including the knowledge of the content, audience and sociolinguistic rules (O'Mally & Chamot, 1990). Making a plan and an outline by brainstorming using a mind-map and revising the text by using the ability of 'transformation' are very demanding work that requires various cognitive skills such as defining, analyzing, evaluating and modifying (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Writing in a second language is a very complex process that encompasses the ability, not only to communicate in L2, but also to construct one's idea effectively. Along with a lack of familiarity, of confidence with textual and organizational differences, of rhetorical and cultural conventions of a new language, writing in L2 has more errors and is less effective than writing in L1 (Kern, 2000).

Learning Writing as Language Learning

From the perspective that the nature of L2 writing is different from that of L1 writing, Leki (1996) stated that the primary need of L2 writing is for language learning

and L2 writing classes should focus on language. Many L2 scholars argued that explicit grammar instruction is important for L2 writing instruction (Ellis, 1994; Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Teaching and learning writing cannot be divorced from teaching and learning grammar (Byrd, 2005). Thus explicitly focused grammar and vocabulary instruction along with directive error correction is necessary not only to improve L2 writing ability but also to improve linguistic proficiency (Ferris et al., 2000). From the background discussed above, the writing as a process approach was criticized by many L2 scholars in that it overlooks the important feature of language accuracy of L2 writers and gives a false impression that grammar instruction focused on error-correction is not productive (Leki &Carson, 1997).

Writing practice inevitably involves feedback from the instructor that helps the students to improve their writing. Despite the tedious work and the time constraints for providing detailed, fine-grained error-correction, the L2 students who did receive feedback about grammar and content produced improved rewriting practice. Particularly those who received grammar feedback showed a great improvement in the content of the paper (Fathman & Whalley, 1990). Feedback is an important element of writing practice. Particularly for those who need to improve language proficiency as well as writing ability, the detailed feedback about grammar errors is significant for the quality of their writing. L2 writers require explicit feedback from the instructor for the structure and the content of the writing and also for grammar (Kepner, 1991;Ferris et al., 2000; Ferris, 2002); otherwise, it will be a serious loss for them to improve their writing and language ability.

In this regard, the instructors and educators of L2 writing courses should have more understanding of the nature of the L2 writing process and the L2 students in terms of their learning strategies and rhetorical and cultural knowledge to help them to improve their writing ability (Myles, 2002).

As introduced so far, there have been studies conducted about the second language learners' interaction with the tutors during the tutorials with a focus on analyzing the socio-cultural and linguistic features that influence the effectiveness of the writing instruction, and measuring the effectiveness of the talk and interaction during the writing instruction quantitatively and qualitatively. However, instead of investigating the imminent problems that L2 writers encounter that interfere with their writing practice in the writing center, those studies have focused on finding out how to improve writing instruction with certain strategies or techniques, what are the variables that influence the writing instruction positively or negatively. In other words, they have focused on analyzing the external elements of the tutorial practice that are out of context, such as learner variables, socio-cultural variables, instructional strategies, etc. and relied on measuring the success of the tutorial from the standards established from out of the tutorial practice by itself.

Thus, this study will investigate the talk and interaction during the writing tutorial with an interest in the instructional talk that occurs in the writing practice; how their writing instruction occurs; how the tutor and the second language learners work and interact with each other; what 'better writing' means from the view of the students' immediate need; and what a 'better writer' means from the tutors' view for the goal of the tutorial. This study, in this regard, will be an instructive resource to understand the

nature of the second language learners' writing practice during the writing tutorials and will be beneficial to the educators and administrators in ESL/EFL fields.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study of second language (L2) writers' experiences as clients in a writing center at a large Midwestern university was motivated by the following factors. First, as Jackson (2008, p. 23) has observed, "Writing centers, like all educational spaces, are sites of contestation and struggle." This situation alone inspires and validates writing center-related research. Second, L2 writers now make up a sizable portion of the clientele seeking writing center assistance at many writing centers in the United States, thus generating a need to see what their experiences are like, especially since their L2 background dictates that what they bring to writing center tutorials in terms of knowledge and needs concerning writing is bound to differ in some ways from the knowledge and needs of native English speaking (L1) clients participating in such tutorials as well as the tutors themselves. Third, research concerning L2 clients in writing centers has not yet assembled a comprehensive picture of their writing center experiences. There has been important L2 research in this area, including a special issue of the *Journal of Second Language Writing* published in 2004. However, as the guest editors of that special issue acknowledged in their introduction to the issue, while "research on L2 writers in the WC is beginning to increase," a number of important

questions merit further investigation (Williams and Severino, 2004, p. 167). Finally, there is an ongoing need to identify the best possible means of researching L2 writers and their writing center experiences. The study reported here is a response to all of these factors.

Methodologically speaking, this study can be described as case studies approached ethnographically in order to understand the work of the international student's writing tutorials, with a focus on their instructional conversation during the tutorial. The larger purpose of a case study is to investigate the phenomena that occur in a naturally occurring context from the perspective of the participants (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). The decision to conduct this study within a broadly conceptualized case study format was in line with a call made by Williams and Severino in the 2004 special issue of the *Journal of Second Language Writing* cited earlier. These guest editors closed their introduction to the special issue with a series of questions they saw as needing to be answered and with the observation that "case study research of tutoring interactions and relationships can address many of the above questions" (p. 170).

This study investigated such "interactions and relationships" from the perspective of the participants, i.e., the tutors and the international student tutees. It did so by focusing in particular on the conversations that took place during tutorials, a focus that has been surprisingly limited in writing center research given the centrality of interaction to what occurs in writing centers. Registad (1982) proposed an ethnographically-oriented approach to studying this interaction, but relatively few writing center researchers have continued along that path. As Pemberton (2010, p. 24) notes, "the number and frequency of such studies are too few and too far between." He goes on to say that "few researchers

now seem willing to adopt this 'lost' methodology" and attributes this to a lack of writing center scholars trained in such research methods and a mistrust of these methods (p. 24).

There has been some L2 research in this area (Davis, Hayward, Hunter, and Wallace, 2010; Nakamaru, 2010; Thonus, 2002, 2004; Williams, 2004). In particular, drawing on Registad's (1982) approach and Fanselow's (1977) taxonomy for analyzing English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' classroom interaction, Davis et al. (2010), in their important article "The Function of Talk in the Writing Conference: A Study of Tutorial Conversation," coded six possible conversational moves in their analysis of tutorial interaction involving four tutors and their L2 clients. However, as Davis et al. (2010, p. 27) observe, "Research has hardly begun to describe the nature of conversation interaction." Building on that gap, and on the assumption that the best way to learn about what happens between L1 tutors and L2 tutees during writing center engagement is to look closely at the ensuring interaction, the study placed a strong emphasis on capturing such interaction. It did so by looking at specific tutorial cases that revealed the recurring features of the conversation in the writing tutorials and conceptualizing the features from the perspective of the students and the tutors.

Conversation is a medium for interaction between individuals who bring different backgrounds and identities to such interactions, and it is important to understand the impact these differences can have on what takes place within those conversations. Those conversations are not neutral encounters; they are shaped by the personalities, backgrounds, and needs of those who participate in them. An added variable in the case of writing center tutorial conversations is the existence of writing center philosophies

and policies designed to guide these conversations. These philosophies and policies construct certain expectations for what should take place and how it should take place. Tutors are expected to act in accordance with these expectations and have been trained to do just that. These expectations form their starting point for tutorial interactions. However, tutees may arrive at tutorials with different expectations and thus enter the conversations from a different starting point, particularly L2 writers, whose educational backgrounds, culturally-mediated beliefs and behaviors, rhetorical knowledge, and linguistic ability do not match the L1 clients writing center tutors are usually trained to work with. Thus, the tutors and L2 tutees are not similar partners in what Severino (2005) has called the "contact zone" of the writing center tutorial. The conversations that emerge capture the various dimensions shaping how individuals participate in them, thus making them an ideal focus of the kind of study reported here. Thus, close analysis of the talk-in-interaction during the tutorials through a thick description (Geertz, 1973) is provided, and this chapter describes the methodological decisions that made this possible.

The Setting and Context of the Study

The site for this study was the Center for the Study of Teaching and Writing (CSTW) at a major Midwestern university, which has a population of 55,000 undergraduate and graduate students on its main campus, including over 5,000 international students at the time the study was conducted. CSTW began as a subsidiary organization of the English department in 1977 and became an independent writing research center in 1999. In many ways, the Center exemplifies the literature on writing centers, their histories, and

evolution. That is, it closely follows the philosophies and practices that have emerged in the writing center literature, as will be described shortly.

The Writing Center is one part of the larger CSTW program, which consists of three parts: a writing center for tutoring the entire University community, a university-focused center for instructors of writing courses with provided tutoring, and a community-focused center for instructors and students in the local community (Dangler, 2004). CSTW also sponsors and conducts research on writing instruction runs various programs and directs the university's 'Writing Across the Curriculum' program. It also offers a minor degree program in Professional Writing and Digital Media Program and organizes multiple literacy events through a variety of media, including print, broadcast, and the Internet.

The philosophical background of CSTW is based on North (1984) and Lunsford (1991). North (1984) argued that, "The writing center is to produce better writers, not better writing." (p. 438), a seminal statement that continues to shape the core mission of writing centers across the United States. In other words, the focus of writing center tutorials should be on assisting the long-term development of students as writers, not short-term repairs of the shortcomings in the work they bring to their tutorials. In line with this core philosophy, writing center tutors are expected to work as nondirective facilitators of tutorial interactions as opposed to acting as directive teachers of writing. In short, the Writing Center does not correct peripheral errors as a fix-it-shop would. Instead, the Writing Center works collaboratively with the clients to make them better writers based on Lunsford's (1991) model of a *Burkean Parlor*. In this view, knowledge is not conveyed as a measurable object or internally stored in individuals. Knowledge is contextually situated and constructed by collaborative interaction between tutors and

clients.

In alignment with this conceptual background on writing instruction, the basic policy of the Writing Center is "No Proofreading," a policy that had major implications for the present study, as will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5. CSTW does not teach writing techniques or technical skills. It does not provide a proofreading or editing service in the face-to-face or online tutorials it offers. Instead, tutors, as noted earlier, are trained to help the clients to become better writers. How they instruct the clients in becoming better writers is keenly tied to their actual work and the philosophy of writing instruction in the Writing Center. The question, of course, is how they do that, particularly when working with L2 writers. The 'no proofreading' policy requires the tutors to explain "what we do in the Writing Center" so as to deflect client interest in proofreading. Students can be disappointed, even frustrated, upon learning that the service they were expecting is not offered. As the results of this and previous studies have shown, this is an especially important point where L2 writers are concerned. This point is developed in much greater detail in later chapters of this study. This policy and the overall philosophy of the Writing Center are enacted in the interactional production of the tutorials and also in staff meetings and collegial conversations.

The tutorials were conducted in a small cubicle that had a round table with a computer on top, and two chairs. The Writing Center had four cubicles, which were divided by glass walls. Students could choose either a 50-minutes tutorial or a 20-minute tutorial depending on their needs. The 50-minute tutorials were conducted in the individualized cubicles in the Writing Center, and the students could make an appointment either online or by phone, or come as a walk-in. The 20-minute tutorials

were conducted in the main library as a satellite writing center and were usually provided on a first-come and first-served basis.

The Writing Center at the university which served as the research site was seen as particularly suitable for the study reported here because of the philosophy articulated earlier and the presence of a large international student clientele. Indeed, L2 writers constituted approximately half of the Writing Center's tutorial population.

Participants

Tutors

The number of tutors, both graduate and undergraduate students, was around 25 at the time the study was conducted. Their academic majors were diverse, but most came from the College of the Arts, Humanities, and Education. Graduate student tutors were required to participate in a two-day workshop before they began tutoring, and they worked 10 to 20 hours per week, which entailed 8 or 16 hours of actual tutoring. They also attended weekly staff meetings where they discussed various issues about writing, tutees, tutorials and other tutor projects. These weekly meetings were a focus of interest for this study as well, as they were a place where the purpose and program of the Center was often articulated and reinforced. Undergraduate student tutors were required to go through a 5-credit tutor-training course, called "Writing Center Theory and Practice," which is focused on tutoring. They read the literature on writing center history and philosophy, participated in mock tutorials in class, and had tutorial observations on site. At the end of the course, which ran one academic quarter, they interviewed with the director of the Writing Center, who then selected the incoming tutors. Among the 25

tutors in the Center, the tutorials from 11 tutors (3 undergraduate students, 8 graduate students) who had more than two years of tutoring experience in the Center were videotaped. All were U.S. born, native English speakers, facts that were important in the context of this study, as none of them shared a background with the L2 tutees.

Students

The client population of the Writing Center was about a 50/50 ratio of undergraduate to graduate students, and roughly a 50/50 ratio of English native speakers to nonnative speakers. Freshmen in required First-Year English classes (ENG 109, 110), who were both native and nonnative speakers, were the largest population served by the writing center. The students from these classes were asked by their instructors to visit the writing center as a class requirement to get help for their writing. The rest came to the writing center by learning about it from its webpage, friends, or from their instructors, who wanted them to improve their writing through one-to-one tutorials. Among them, about 30 percent of first-time visitors return (Doug Dangler, Associate Director of the writing center, personal communication in spring, 2010). Thirty six international students (17 Graduate students, 19 Undergraduate students) participated in this study. Thirty three students were from East Asia (China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam), 1 student from Estonia, 1 student from Turkey and 2 from Africa. Thirteen students were first time visitors, and twenty three students were returning tutees, as depicted in the tables below.

Native Country	Number of Participants
China	14
South Korea	9
Taiwan	4
Hong Kong	2
Japan	2
Africa	2
Estonia	1
Turkey	1
Vietnam	1
Total	36

Table 3.1. Participants' Native Countries

Academic Program	Number of Participants	Total
Graduate	17	36
Undergraduate	19	

Table 3.2. Participants' Academic Program

Previous Experience with Writing Center	Number of Participants	Total
First Time Tutees	13	36
Returning Tutees	23	

Table 3.3. Participants' Previous Experience with Writing Center

Data Collection

Before collecting the data for this study, I began to attend the weekly staff meeting of the writing center with the permission of the director from January 2010 to June 2010. During that time in Spring 2010, I attended the tutor-training course, which was designed for undergraduate students who wanted to work as a tutor, where they learned about the work and history of the writing center. From this early participant observation of the weekly meeting and the tutor-training course, I was able to learn how the tutors worked with each other to prepare for their work and to discuss the philosophy of their writing instruction. During this time, I was also able to learn about the tutors more personally and build a rapport with them.

During the summer of 2010, I videotaped 19 sessions of tutorials, and then 17 sessions of tutorials that autumn. After each of the tutorials, semi-structured, informal interviews with the students were conducted about the purpose of their visit, their writing-related concerns, and their opinions about the writing tutorials. They lasted five to ten minutes on average per student and were audio-recorded. Semi-structured, informal interviews with the tutors running about 30 minutes per tutor in a casual conversation mode also were conducted, with questions asked about their experience as a tutor, such as the difficulty of teaching writing, and their philosophy of writing instruction. These interviews were audio-recorded as well.

Videotaping the Face-to-Face Tutorials

Tutorials were provided from Monday to Friday, 8:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Scheduling was done by logging into a webpage for the writing center or done by phone. The tutors were

usually represented by only the first letters of their names on the screen of the scheduling page. No further background information about the tutors was made available to the public. The tutees were not allowed to make a second-appointment in the same week without permission. The tutees had access to the tutor's initials in order to schedule a follow-up tutorial the next week. Right after each tutorial, the tutee was asked to participate in an online survey (optional, not mandatory) that asked about their tutorial experience and the degree of their satisfaction. The tutors could also leave a note in the online scheduling administrative program if there was anything to be shared or referred to for future tutorials. The tutors could also send a note to the instructor for the course in which a student's paper under tutorial discussion had been written through a program if there was anything to notify the instructor about, such as to confirm the student's visit to the Center for their class requirement.

I videotaped 36 tutorials with the consent of the tutors and the clients. Informal interviews after the tutorials with the tutor and the client were conducted. Thirty-six videotaped tutorials (1,290 minutes) were logged, and the identified sequences of the cases that were felt to impact negatively on the international students' efforts to receive help from the work of the tutorials were transcribed for analysis.

Attending Weekly Staff Meeting

All tutors in the Writing Center met once a week. The Associate Director announced special events for the week and introduced various issues of tutorials, including writing/tutoring strategies and suggestions. The discussions were led by one or two tutors. They provided handouts, power point slides, mock-up performances, and shared

their thoughts in small groups and all together. During this time, the tutors shared their actual tutorial experiences and raised questions to find out how other tutors dealt with specific issues. Other tutors shared their strategies for dealing with certain tutorial issues and suggested new strategies for addressing the problems. The weekly staff meeting provided an ongoing instructional space for the tutors. By sharing problems, the tutors learned how the others dealt with similar difficulties and learned from each other. Role-played tutoring and discussion demonstrated methods of how to work as members of the Center. Thus, the tutors were learning by showing and sharing the knowledge of tutoring as a member of the Writing Center staff. Eight hours of the weekly staff meetings were observed from September to December 2010. Field notes were produced throughout the observations of the meetings.

Field Notes

Field notes included the date of the attendance at the staff meeting and the major issues that were discussed, such as an announcement for the visit of the students from the English 110 or any other administrative events that the tutors needed to be aware of. According to the topics that were proposed for discussion in the meetings, I took quick notes that included recording some interesting comments from the tutors that came up to follow the theme of their discussion. The meetings were audio-recorded to serve as a kind of member check on the accuracy of my memory and the writing of the field notes. After the meetings, my personal thoughts and questions were included to organize what I learned from their shared talk.

Informal Interviews with tutors and the tutees

Semi-structured informal interviews were audio taped for about 30 minutes on average with the tutors about their ideas concerning writing instruction, philosophy toward conducting tutorials, and their experiences of tutoring, including their difficulties and what they saw as their rewarding moments. Twenty audio-taped interviews with the tutors (270 minutes) were logged and identified by the themes that related to the study's research questions, and then gathered for analysis. These are the questions asked to the tutors during the interview that initiated sharing their experience as a tutor in the writing center:

Q. What do you think of your work as a tutor?
Q. How do you explain to the tutee who doesn't understand the "No proofread policy"?
Q. How do you prioritize the problems to work on with the L2 tutees?
Q. How do you feel when you can't go over the client's paper as it was requested due to the time limitation or for any other reasons?
Q. What is the most difficult in doing the tutorials?
Q. When do you feel most fruitful as a tutor?

The interviews with the tutees were also designed as semi-structured, informal interviews. They were conducted right after the tutorials for five to ten minutes per student and audio taped with their consent. Thirty-six audio taped interviews with tutees (280 minutes) were logged and identified by the themes that related to the study's research questions, and then collected for analysis. These are the questions asked to the tutees to learn about their opinions of their tutorial experience in the writing center:

Q. What were your concerns of your paper today? Were they solved during the tutorial?

Q. Was it your first visit to the Center?

Q. What do you expect from the tutor when you bring your paper?

Q. What do you think about the "No proofreading policy?"

Q. Do you find the tutorials helpful on your visits? In what way?

Q. How do you find the tutorials useful to your writing?

Q. Are you planning to come back? (For the first-time tutee)

Data Analysis

Conversation Analysis as an Analytical Framework

In order to analyze the interactional details and dynamics of the tutorial interaction, this study employed a modified conversation analytic framework, in line with the L2 writing center literature cited earlier (Davis, Hayward, Hunter, and Wallace, 2010; Nakamaru, 2010; Thonus, 2002, 2004; Williams, 2004). CA is the study of the orderliness of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). It is a systematic analysis of talk that is produced in everyday human interaction. Initially, CA began as a subdiscipline of sociology ('ethnomethodology') in the late 1960s, and the CA researchers focused on describing the organizational structure of the mundane, ordinary conversation that occurs in everyday life in human interaction. Drawing interest to the organizational structure of the conversation since the late 1970s, CA has been used widely to analyze talk in institutional settings, such as news (Heritage and Clayman, 2002), medical settings (Heath 1992; Maynard 2003), job interviews (Button, 1992), courtrooms (Drew, 1992), academic advising (He 1998, Limberg, 2010), and graduate

seminars (Waring 2001, 2002a, b). The domain of CA has expanded from ordinary conversation to institutional talk, including the field of language learning and instruction as well as other pedagogical contexts (Koshik, 2002; Markee, 2000; Mori, 2002; Seedhouse, 2004)

CA's focus is on "the interactional organization of social activities" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008, p.12), and it describes organizational structure in terms of turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair practices (Goodwin, 1981; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Turn-taking in natural conversation organizes talk–in–interaction that is locally managed and administered by the participants to the discourse. It is controlled interactionally and joined collaboratively in the sequence of the prior turn and the next turn. Each turn provides a context for the next turn. Each next turn shows the speaker's understanding of the prior turn (Moerman and Sacks, 1988). In this regard, 'adjacency pair' is a basic unit of organization in conversation that consists of a sequence of two utterances produced by different speakers: first pair part (FPP) and second pair part (SPP), as in question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance/refusal. etc. Once a question is asked, the answer is expected to come. Turns in this way are analyzable in terms of their construction and completion. Upon the production of a first pair part, which is the end of each possible turn-constructional unit (TCU), a transition-relevance place (TRP) becomes available for the next turn. A second pair part is made conditionally relevant (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Building on these notions of interaction, CA is used to examine a speaker's social actions that are accomplished through talk and the mutual understandings that ensue (intersubjectivity) as well as their management of the interactional context.

The context in CA is a locally produced organizational structure of the talk and interaction of the participants. It puts emphasis exclusively on the member's analysis of talk-in-interaction and disregards any contextual dimension that is not observable in a speaker's behavior, as the quotation below illustrates:

> It is a context-free structure which defines how and where context-sensitivity can be displayed; the particularities of context are exhibited in systematically organized ways and places, and those are shaped by the context-free organization. (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974, p. 699)

Organization of turn-taking in CA is *context-sensitive*, in that it fits to the fact of variability but is insensitive to those social parameters that are independent of the local organizational structure (*context-free*). The production and understanding of utterances in conversation originate from the features of their placement in an organized sequence of talk (Heritage & Maynard, 2006).

CA and Talk-extrinsic Data

CA has been critiqued in terms of defining the context too narrowly, in that the evidence of the mutual understanding in talk-in-interaction should be observable and should be located in the context. This critique has generated great controversy, and the debate is ongoing (Billig, 1999; Nelson, 1994; Pomerantz, 1998; Schegloff, 1997, 1998, 1999; Vandijk, 2008, Wetherell, 1998). In short, Waring (2012) described the nature of the controversy as "to go or not to go outside the talk itself? Or do we gain any analytic leverage by bringing in contextual information not manifested in the details of talk?" (p. 478). By going outside the talk, she meant utilizing the ethnographic data, such as an

interview, and referred to it as ‘talk-extrinsic data’.

Moerman (1988), in response to this issue, proposed to combine CA with ethnography and argued that the description and analysis must be culturally contexted by combining ethnography with its concern for significance, history, and intention through sequential analysis. His argument supports the idea of utilizing talk-extrinsic data to enhance the analysis. Silverman (1999), Maynard (2003) and Pomerantz (2005) advocate the idea of combining CA and ethnography in their discussions: CA provides the ‘how’ question, and the ethnographic description moves to the ‘why’ question about the context (Silverman, 1999); ethnographic data complements CA by providing the details of the settings and identities (Maynard, 2003); and ethnographic data clarifies the ambiguous, puzzling patterns of conduct and serves as confirmatory evidence for claims about discourse (Pomerantz, 2005). As stated, talk-extrinsic data can provide insights on the interpretation of the interactional aspect that might be overlooked during the CA analysis.

Waring (2012) summarized the potential benefits of employing talk-extrinsic data from the discussions of the connection between CA and ethnography in four ways: confirm, specify, disambiguate, and correct the ambiguous parts from an initial CA analysis. She pointed out that CA unfolds what was done as it was displayed by the participants in their moment-to-moment interpretation in their talk-in-interaction, whereas talk-extrinsic data shows what was done as it was intended and reported by the participants. The two different data sets do not validate or invalidate one another; however, with the convergence, we obtain the understanding of what is displayed as what is intended. In this way they offer us a deeper understanding of the complexity of the dynamics of human interaction (Waring, 2012).

CA for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Research

The application of CA to the field of second language learning was begun in the late 1990s. Firth & Wagner (1997) argued that the scope of SLA studies should be broadened to include the study of naturally occurring talk and interaction, rather than collecting the data under experimental laboratory conditions. Since then, a growing number of CA-inspired studies were generated within and outside the classroom in educational contexts (He, 2000; Hellerman, 2006; Markee, 2004; Seedhouse, 2004).

The conversational repair practice is viewed by the SLA researchers as a "sociopsychological engine that enables learners to get comprehended input" (Markee, 2000, p.31), and this view is consistent with the important work of Schegloff (1991), who argued that repair is evidence of socially distributed cognition, as are sequencing and turn-taking. The idea that cognition is not an individually operated internal activity but rather a socially distributed phenomenon from the observable conversational behaviors has also been advocated by Vygotskyan researchers, who assert that learning occurs through interaction between novice and expert.

Concerning the methodological benefits of using CA for SLA studies, Markee (2000) argued that based on empirically collected data, CA accounts for a learner's interactional competence in different speech exchange systems; identifies the nature of learning interaction either as successful and unsuccessful learning behaviors; provides the analytical potential of fine-grained transcripts of communicative events; and shows how meaning is constructed as socially distributed phenomena through the interactional practice.

Given this study's particular interest in what took place between the L1 tutors and L2 tutees during their conversational interactions within the tutorials, as well as the desire to identify key issues arising from those interactions, it was felt that a data analytic approach inspired by CA principles and perspectives would best serve the study's purposes and provide meaningful answers to the research questions posed.

Treatment of Data

The first task for data analysis is to locate a potentially interesting phenomenon in the data (Hutchby & Woofitt, 2008), either as a type of turn or a noticeable kind of sequence. The videotaped tutorials in this study were logged and identified by the 'unit of sequence' that shows the nature of the work of the tutorials. These sequences consist of sub-sequences that share the common nature of the work of the tutorial. The tutorial basically consists of three sections: opening, body of the tutorial, closing.

The Opening sequence includes sub-sequences that share common categorical features, which are the greeting and the setting of an agenda for the tutorial. Under the sequence of setting an agenda for the tutorial, several more sub-sequences can be included, such as 'formulating why I'm here', 'negotiating the workability of the tutee's formulation of why I'm here', and 'achieving agreement for the work of the tutorial'.

The body sequence includes the sequences of moving on to the work of the tutorial, for example, 'moving on to the paper to work with', 'finding the first problem to work with', 'working for the problem through negotiation between the tutor and the tutee', and 'achieving the common understanding for the problem'. Once they (tutors and tutees achieved the agreed-on common understanding of the problem they worked on with each

other, they moved to the next problem to address. If they did not achieve initial agreement about the problem, they did not move to the next problem without agreeing with each other on how it should be addressed. These sequences of problem-solving practice recur through the end of the tutorials. In this way, the body sequence of the tutorial includes many recurring sequences of their problem-solving practices.

The closing sequence includes the sequences of wrap-up and closing. The sequence of wrap-up often begins with a reminder of the time remaining for the tutorials and includes the sequence that checks the student's understanding of what to do after the tutorial with respect to revising their paper. The question asking about the student's understanding in this sequence is intended to prepare to end the work of the tutorial. However, depending on the student's response to this question, the tutor sometimes goes back to the problems that they discussed previously and reiterates how to work with the unsolved problems. Once they have achieved an agreement for the wrap-up questions, the sequence of greeting follows to close the tutorials.

In this way, the tutorials are identified by the 'unit of sequence' that shares the common nature of the work of the tutorial and shows the same pattern of interactional practice. Once they were identified and located as potentially interesting phenomena in the data, the sequences that revealed the noticeable recurring patterns of the interactional practice were selected for transcribing. The selected sequences that showed the recurring features were thoroughly transcribed for analysis following the conventions of transcript notation (Saks, Schegloff, Jefferson, 1974). From the accounts described in the transcript analysis, themes that captured the primary dynamics of the L2 writers' interactional engagement in their writing tutorials related to the study's research questions were

generated and synthesized into nine issues which are introduced and examined in Chapter 4.

Of the nine issues that pertained to the interaction between the international students and the tutors were identified through analysis of the tutorials: six originated with the students, and three with the tutors. Representative samples of conversational interactions, the interviews with tutors/tutees, and the field notes from the weekly staff meetings, were triangulated to provide the dynamics of the tutorial interaction and the nature of the writing instruction that took place.

In Chapter 4, each issue is presented through the transcripts of representative tutorial sequences. This approach was adopted as opposed to presenting conventional case studies for each participant in the belief that a thematic, issues-oriented approach would better serve the study's purposes. Thus, a semi-case analysis occurs as one particular focal participant is used to illustrate each case within the issues examined. The selection of sequences was guided by the research questions. In the presentation of each of the nine issues, an initial CA analysis is followed up with relevant interview data and, where appropriate, staff meeting data.

Researcher Subjectivity

As an L2 writer myself, I easily sympathized with the L2 tutees' perspectives while observing the interaction of the tutorials. Their concerns as L2 writers were the same concerns that I had, and that circumstance made me more curious and interested in learning how they worked with the tutors effectively to improve their writing. While

recognizing that my identification with the student participants could influence my analysis and presentation of the data and thus constitute a limitation of the study, I made ongoing efforts to minimize this identification effect. As an L2 writer, but also as a former educator in language learning, my curiosity about their interaction with the writing practice in tutorials moved toward an emphasis on how the native speaker tutor viewed the issues and concerns of L2 writers and their writing and how they dealt with the practical issues arising during the tutorials. In this way I tried to distance myself from the student participants as much as possible. A constant focus on the study's research questions also helped in this regard.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss findings from the analysis of the instructional conversations in the writing tutorial sessions. It is important to note that, at the research site for this study, more than half of the visiting population of the Writing Center are international students. Their ability to write in English is critical for their academic success, and, as students who are from a different language, culture, and educational system, dealing with academic writing in English is a challenging task. Thus, for them, the Writing Center will be perceived as an important source of the kind of support they believe they need to address their writing-related issues. However, an initial review of the data collected for this dissertation suggests that, for a variety of reasons, international students may not receive the help they expect during a writing tutorial session. The international students who do participate in these sessions do not always return for more help from the Writing Center, even when they continue to believe they need assistance. Further, some international students who could benefit from the writing tutorials at the

Writing Center do not seek such help at all (although this issue is not addressed in this dissertation).

It appears then, that an important gap exists between what the Writing Center attempts to do and what actually occurs when international students utilize its services. This perceived gap, which appears to be a common phenomenon, is one that has attracted the attention of some second language (L2) writing specialists, as well as others who research issues related to writing centers, given (a) the existence of writing centers at many American universities, and (b) the presence of L2 writers at many of those universities. This dissertation sought to address that gap at one writing center serving a very large Midwestern research university.

Drawing from an extensive analysis of the study's data, this chapter is organized around nine issues that emerged from that analysis. Collectively, these issues show how the work of the writing tutorial may be difficult and inhibit the tutor and L2 student tutee from reaching their goals of improving student writing. The nine issues were identified by reviewing the entire corpus of data many times, identifying what appeared to be prominent dynamics in the instructional conversations in the tutorial sessions, and then grouping these dynamics into categories; these categories became the nine issues.

Of the nine issues, six originate with or are centered around the student as Writing Center client, while the remaining three focus on issues that start primarily with the tutors. However, it is important to note that whether an issue originated with the student or with the tutor, the way the issue played out – that is, how the tutor and student handled a 'writing tutorial' and whether the 'writing tutorial' subsequently facilitated writing improvement - involved both parties. Hence, the differentiation between the six student-

oriented issues and the three tutor-related issues is not as clearcut as the division into two categories suggests. The categorization depended on from which direction the issue *primarily* originated: student or tutor.

It should also be noted from the start that, while this chapter focuses on issues, or problems, successes also occurred during tutorial interactions. However, what the data analysis indicated was that issues were far more common. Hence, they serve as the focus of the chapter. As a way of illustrating those issues meaningfully, when each issue is examined, segments of tutor-tutee interaction are presented and analysed, with one representative case used for each of the nine issues.

Section 1 – Issues Originating With the Student

Issue #1: Limited English Proficiency

One issue that consistently interfered with the students' attempts to receive help from the tutorial was their *lack of English proficiency*. The international students were admitted to the university in part based on their scores on a prominent standardized English proficiency test, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The university's minimum TOEFL admission score is somewhat higher than is the case at many American universities. Still, communicating only in English requires a lot of work for international students, who have not previously used English as extensively as in the university setting, and not for such authentic communicative contexts as interaction with Writing Center tutors (most of whom are native speakers of English). Indeed, many of these students speak relatively little English outside their classes; opportunities to speak

in their native language (L1) may be common as well as preferable. Thus, they may enter somewhat unfamiliar territory when embarking on a Writing Center tutorial.

The procedure involved in tutorials is that, after scheduling an appointment, the students bring a written assignment they're working on to the Writing Center to receive help. This may be of their own volition or because one of their teachers has encouraged them to do so. As noted earlier, the spoken interaction during the tutorial is strictly in English. As part of this interaction, the students need to make clear the nature of the help they need, and problems may originate there. For example, when a tutor asks a text-based question such as, "What do you mean by this?", which is a routine question that initiates the instruction, if the international student cannot explain what he/she meant in the text, the tutor cannot get a sense of what the student wants to talk about in their paper, and it then becomes difficult for the tutor to provide the guidance necessary. Thus, tutorial interactions are often inhibited by the students' difficulty in expressing themselves effectively.

To highlight this issue, I will provide an illustrative case below where the student's English proficiency becomes an issue in how the tutor and student interact during the 'writing tutorial.' I first provide a brief transcript of interaction between the tutor and the student, and I then explicate the transcript using the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 2 and the methods described in Chapter 3. The case illustrates how the student's English proficiency causes a breakdown of the flow of the instruction.

Case #1: "Can you explain this idea to me a little bit more fully?"

The student in this case is an undergraduate student from South Korea making his first visit to the Writing Center. Hyun-Chul came to the Writing Center with his paper from his English 110 class[3] (mandatory First Year English course); visiting the Writing Center with a paper is a requirement for the class. All students who take English 110 (both native and non-native English speakers) must visit the Writing Center at least once to work with the tutor about their paper at any stage in their writing. Hyun-Chul was quiet and thoughtful. Steve, the tutor in this case is a native English speaker. He is a graduate student who has been working in the Writing Center for three years. He is an experienced tutor in working with international students and very knowledgeable about the English 110 assignment as well. Steve read the paper and then initiated the interaction by asking the student a question. In order to get an answer from the student about the problematic lines in the text, Steve had to revise his questions several times. Hyun-Chul appears to have a problem in explaining what he meant in his text and also appears to have a problem understanding the tutor's question, thus illustrating issues related to English language proficiency.

Transcript 4-1

82 ►	T:	I'm confused here so this sentence ((T reading the lines aloud))
83		*There are number of reasons brought about this result (.h)*
84		*but the step for measure for following the reasons has to be (.h)*

[3] English 110 is the course that all freshmen are required to take, and visiting the writing center at least once during the course is mandatory for their course assignment. The tutors are informed of their visits in the beginning of the semester during the staff meeting. Since they are a regular visiting clientele every semester, most tutors are quite familiar with the assignments that they bring to the Center. However, for those novice writers from English 110, the tutors usually begin the work of the tutorial by checking their course syllabus and the course assignment sheet first to make sure that the students have a full understanding of their assignment.

85		*systematic and strong because inappropriate punishment*
86		*and unsystematic spiritual education can bring more serious (.h)*
87		*crimes by people with criminal record than they did before*
88		Um (1.0)
89 ►	T:	Can you explain this idea (.) to me a little bit about more fully?
90	C:	=hm hm u-um (.) um
91		This is- This is about s-some e:h wha-what happen in-in south korea
92	T:	Okay
93	C:	And the:- nowadays in south korea eh there are (.1) a-a- number of-
94		a number of a crime (.) crime(.) agains um the- the younger- younger-
95		younger- student
96	T:	Hm hm
97	C:	And uh(.) uh such a- uh relatedly sexual offense (.)
98	T:	Hm
99	C:	A:nd uh: um two- two years ago eh some- some guys- a guy um
100		ha- ha-has some event- uh has some crime- crime uh again um-
101		eight years old um younger(.1) young(.) girl(.)
102	T:	Hm hm
103	C:	A:n after- after two <u>y</u>ears a:n da u:h there are a:n h<u>a</u>ppen same- same sing
104		crime in South Korea (.)
105	T:	Hm hm
106	C:	But- but the: the puniushmnet the- the degree of punishment is bery- bery
107		lower than the other countries
108	T:	hm hm
109	C:	and so- so nowadays this is very big <u>i</u>ssue in a south korea
110	T:	Sure(.) But in terms of this sentence (.)
111		Right here ((clearing his throat)) Um(.2) So
112 ►		Do you mean that there are number of reasons(.1) that crime is going up?
113 ►		Or do you mean that there are (.) that the crime rate going up has(.)
114 ►		caused a number of things (.2) because *brought about this result* (.)
115		First of all I don't know if you mean *brought about* ***by*** *this result*?
116		But (.) reasons aren't brought about by anything (.)
117		reasons c<u>a</u>use something (.)
118		So it seems like(.) this could mean one of the two things
119		either you mean (.2) there are number of reasons (.1)(h)
120		that the crime rate is going up
121	C:	Hm-hm ((nodding))
122 ►	T:	Is that what you mean?
123	C:	*Okay*=
124 ►	T:	=Eh- I mean(.)
125 ►		Are you going to tell me the reasons why the crime rate is going up?
126 ►		Or are you going to tell me the things that the crime rate is caused?
127 ►		Which one?
128	C:	A:n not eh-not-not separate a:n da put- put this sentence in the: the-
129		this sentence and there are number of reasons eh the- the rate is going up
130 ►	T:	Okay(.1) A(h)l-right

131 ► So you can just say that the rate is going up
132 If you didn't wanna repeat (3.0)
133 If you didn't wanna repeat that there would be other ways to say it
134 you could certainly say there are number of reasons for this increase (.2)

In line 82, Steve finds a problematic line that is hard to understand. He reads out the lines, *"There are number of reasons brought about this result (.h) but the step for measure for following the reasons has to be (.h) systematic and strong because inappropriate punishment and unsystematic spiritual education can bring more serious (.h) crimes by people with criminal record than they did before"* through line 87 and asks the student to explain what he meant in line 89. Hyun-Chul begins his answer in line 90 and continues until line 109. He talks about "what happened in South Korea (line 91), which is about a "crime against a younger student (lines 93-95)" that is a "sexual offense (line 97)" committed by "some guys against eight years old young girl (lines 99-101)". After two years, the "same crime happened (lines 103-104)", "but the degree of punishment is very lower than the other countries (lines 106-107)". So it is a "big issue in South Korea (line 109)". He talks about the sexual offense committed against an eight-year old girl in South Korea. Steve gives him continuers in lines 92, 96, 98, 102, 105 and 108.

Steve in line 110 marks a receipt of what Hyun-Chul answered, then points to the problematic sentence and asks a question one more time. In line 89, Steve had already asked Hyun-Chul an open question, "Can you explain…?" He at this time elaborates his question more and asks Hyun-Chul an optional question, "Do you mean this… or do you mean this…?" in lines 112-114. Before completing the question, Steve reads the phrase "*brought about this result (line 114)*" from the problematic lines and asks another question about the phrase. He adds 'by' in the phrase and asks him if "*brought about **by***

this result" is what he meant. However, without giving Hyun-Chul a turn to answer, Steve continues talking about his confusion until line 117. Then he offers his guess as to what Hyun-Chul might mean by giving an option for him to choose from, "this could mean one of the two things either you mean..." in lines 118-120. By providing so much elaboration of his question, Steve is attempting to make his question easy for Hyun-Chul to follow, as he recognizes the problems Hyun-Chul is having. Hyun-Chul shows his agreement in line 121 by nodding his head. Steve seeks confirmation of his understanding in line 122, "Is that what you mean?" Hyun-Chul answers "Okay" in a soft voice.

What is important to note here is that "Okay" is not the expected, or correct, answer to the question, "Is that what you mean?" It should be either "Yes" or "No". Steve latches onto this struggle with language proficiency in line 124 and revises his question with more elaboration. Steve provides two full statements so that Hyun-Chul can choose an answer in lines 125-126 and asks him to choose one in line 127. Hyun-Chul seems not to fully understand Steve's question. For the two sentences that were provided as options to choose, Hyun-Chul answers, "not separate and put this sentence in this sentence", then says "number of reasons eh the-the rate is going up (line 129)" . Thus, progress during the tutorial is stalled by Hyun-Chul's difficulties with English language proficiency.

Despite it seeming as if Hyun-Chul does not seem to understand what Steve asked him, Hyun-Chul made his answer clear by repeating what Steve said in line 125. Steve accepts it with confirmation in line 130 and gives Hyun-Chul an alternate expression, "the rate is going up (line 131)" and "there are a number of reasons for this increase (line 134)".

So, finally, in this way, the first sentence (line 83) from the problematic lines, "*There are number of reasons brought about this result*" was revised as "There are a number of reasons for this increase".

Steve then moves on to the next sentence.

Transcript 4-2

135	T:	Um *but the step for measure following* (.2)(.h) *the reasons*
136		That's- I don't understand that either(.)
137 ►		Do you mean the response to **this increase**?
138	C:	Yes
139	T:	*But the step for measure following* **this increase** in this way-
140		Ok so there are number of reasons the rate is going up
141		*the step for measure following* **this increase** (.1)
142		*has to be systematic and strong (.)*
143		*because inappropriate punishment*
144		(4.5)
145		*than they did before*
146 ►		Uh- then do u mean that if it is not severe enough
147 ►		then people will be repeat offenders?
148		(2.5)
149 ►	T:	Is that what you mean?
150	C:	Hm ((reading the paper))
151	T:	Bring more serious crimes by people with the criminal record(.1)
152		People with the criminal record committing crimes(.)
153		That sounds to me like repeat offenders like people (.1) um
154		who have gotten through some kind of treatment program
155		or punishment committing another sexual offence
156 ►		Is that (.) what you mean to say?
157	C:	Yes
158	T:	Ok(.1) So(.3) Um(.2)(.h)
159		By *inappropriate* the- you- wha:t makes an *inappropriate punishment*?
160 ►		Is it that(.) it's not severe enough?
161	C:	Hm
162	T:	Or that it's-
163	C:	=H:m um the- the degree of punishment is bery lower(.2)
164		lower than maybe por example um some(.) so- s- um- some- some
165		criminal in south korea get- um- usually ge:t maybe two years or to five
166		years jus- uh bery lower uh punishment in- u:m uh-comparing the=
167	T:	=Right=
168	C:	=the United States
169 ►	T:	Okay(.) So (.2)

170 Let's say insufficient punishment (.2)
171 Um(.5) in *unsystematic spiritual education* now(.)
172 you recommending a systematic spiritual(.1) education in(.) prison
173 Okay(.) Um (4.0)
174 I- I would say(.2) rather than this (.)
175 I would- I would say I would suggest ( )
176 unsystematic spiritual education can lead (.2) to (.)
177 Um(1.0) an increase (.4) in serious crime(.2) serious crimes
178 by people with a criminal record (.2)
179 You don't need this
180 So it's it- it- and- and whether or not that's repeat offen-
181 I mean- it is repeat offenders
182 but you don't need to use that language (.2)
183 I think u can use the language that you've got

Steve reads aloud the second sentence, "*but the step for measure for following the reasons (line 84)"* and asks what it means. He asks a yes/no question, which includes his guess as to what Hyun-Chul means, "this increase (line 137)." With Hyun-Chul's agreement, Steve re-reads the sentence with the addition of "this increase" in line 139, "*But the step for measure following* **this increase".** After "*following",* Steve removed "the reasons" from Hyun-Chul's original sentence and adds "this increase" instead. Then Steve re-reads the sentence aloud to see if it makes sense in lines 140-143. What we see here is that Steve is trying to compensate for Hyun-Chul's language difficulties in an effort to get the interaction back on a productive track in order to make sense of understanding of his sentence.

A four and a half second pause follows. Steve finishes reading the sentence in line 145. He asks another question in lines 146-147. He seeks to understand the Hyun-Chul's clunky sentence, and he needs Hyun-Chul's clarification about it in order to proceed. A two and a half second pause follows. Hyun-Chul does not give him an answer. Steve asks one more time, "Is that what you mean" in line 149. Hyun-Chul does not answer and

instead reads his paper. It is not clear whether Hyun-Chul does not understand Steve's question or if he is not sure of what he meant in his sentence.

Since Hyun-Chul does not answer the question, Steve provides more elaboration of his question and offers his guess as the meaning that Hyun-Chul might have intended (lines 153-155). In other words, Steve repeatedly does the work that Hyun-Chul needs to do for the tutorial – explaining what he meant and then helps Hyun-Chul to answer what he meant (line 156)—as a result of Hyun-Chul's problems with English language proficiency. Steve asks him if it is what he meant. Hyun-Chul agrees with the tutor.

Another question from Steve about "inappropriate punishment" follows in lines 159-160. Instead of answering the question, Hyun-Chul marks a receipt in line 161. Steve tries to offer more elaboration, but Hyun-Chul interrupts him and explains that the "degree of punishment is very lower... two years or to five years compared to the United States" (lines 163-166, 168). Steve accepts the answer (line 167, 169) and gives him an alternate expression, "insufficient punishment," for the phrase "inappropriate punishment" in line 171. Then he reads out loud the next phrase, "*unsystematic spiritual education* (line 171)," and more suggestions for the rest of the sentence follow in lines 174-178. For Hyun-Chul's original sentence in lines 86-87, "*unsystematic spiritual education can bring more serious crimes by people with criminal record than they did before",* Steve provides an alternate expression in lines 176-178, "Unsystematic spiritual education can lead (.2) to (.) an increase (.4) in serious crime(.2) serious crimes by people with a criminal record (.2)" and removes the rest, "than they did before (line 179)". Finally, Hyun-Chul's original sentences (lines 83-87) are revised to an understandable or acceptable level. In an effort to overcome the student's language-related issues and

achieve the goals of the tutorial, Steve assumes more responsibility for improving the writing.

Steve also tells Hyun-Chul to use the phrase "people with a criminal record" instead of "repeat offenders". In order to make the one sentence understandable, Steve had to do work heavily through several sequences and revised the sentence orally in an understandable manner. However, using the technical term "repeat offenders" is just a matter of word choice. Although "repeat offenders" sounds natural in the context, Hyun-Chul's phrase, "people with a criminal record" is understandable as well. Thus, instead of offering the term "repeat offenders", which was not produced from their work with the student, Steve recommends Hyun-Chul to use his own phrase. Steve does not merely work to make Hyun-Chul's paper better. He works for Hyun-Chul to be involved with the work for his paper. In this way, the tutor follows the Center's no proofreading policy.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #1, As illustrated above, in order to understand the text, the tutor and the student had to go through many turns to make sure of the meaning of the sentences. Because of the student's struggles with English language proficiency, the tutor had to revise his questions many times to get a sense of what the student meant in his text. This limited the progress made during the tutorial. Despite the intense work from the tutor on the problematic sentences, it is not clear what the student learned, or thinks that he learned, from the instruction. This kind of situation is what may have led some international students to question the value of the work done by the Writing Center. The tutor and the student went through more of this slow and uneven work with other problematic sentences later in this tutorial; as a result, they had to wrap up the tutorial without going over all of what the student had written. As a result, the

student seemed dissatisfied with the work they had done, and the tutor also seemed to be exhausted and not know what to do more to help strengthen the student's paper. The student's struggles with English language proficiency seemed to be the primary cause of these responses, which are not uncommon among tutors and international students.

In support of this point, there are some conversational moves in Case #1 that would appear to reveal some points at which miscommunication may have occurred. In response to the tutor's efforts to understand the student's text and answers (see lines 110-120, 122, 124-127, 135-137, 139-149, 151-156 and 158-160), the student repeated what the tutor had said; this does not mean that the student understood the tutor's questions or the suggestions made by the tutor to improve the writing. Instead, it may be that the student merely repeated what the tutor said to get through the interaction and maintain momentum or to not appear impolite or stupid. Another conversational move that is revealing is the student's repeated unclear marks of receipt (see lines 121, 123, 138, 150, 157 and 161) to the tutor's questions. In response to the tutor's question to clarify what the student meant in his text, the tutor elaborated several different ways to help the student see what he, the tutor, asked. But the student's marks of receipt, such as "hm-hm", "okay" with nodding, or even "yes" created more confusion about whether the student knew what to answer or if he literally did not understand the tutor's questions. The tutor had to continue revising his questions and provide elaboration for the potential answers in response to these tutee struggles with English.

Looking at this case in relationship to the study itself, among the 19 cases of 50 minute-tutorials and 17 cases of 20-minute tutorials that were collected in this study, this case is a representative one that shows how international students' language proficiency

becomes problematic in the work of the tutorial. In the other tutorials with L2 students, whenever there was a breakdown in their communication, various strategies (using gestures, repeating, rephrasing, etc.) from both the tutor and the student were used to keep the tutorials going. Sometimes, through trial and error, the process worked, and they made sense of each other as the work of tutorial proceeded, but not often.

This point was amplified in one of the staff meetings, where the tutors expressed difficulty in tutoring the L2 students who had difficulty understanding them during tutorials. Here are some of the remarks that were made:

"I had a student who brought her research paper. Her sentences (in the L2 student's paper) were too clunky. I couldn't understand what the paper is about and we were not able to communicate …. I made a suggestion to talk about her primary source but I had no idea if the student understood me." (Nicole, graduate tutor, native English speaker)

"I just had no idea of what to do when I couldn't understand the student. I couldn't understand her writing so I asked her to explain what the paper is about. But I couldn't understand what she was saying. So I couldn't give her any resources or feedback for her paper." (Ashley, graduate tutor, native English speaker)

In terms of how to deal with the breakdown with L2 students during the tutorial, some tutors said that they pretend to understand in order to move on, which made everybody in the staff meeting laugh loudly. Some suggested that the tutor should notify the instructor about the student, because if they (students) were not able to communicate with the tutor in the face-to-face tutorial, there was the possibility that the students may

not even understand what the instructor was saying in class.[4] Some tutors also mentioned international students who in fact sought help with their language skills through the tutorial:

"She asked me how her English was and asked help, like kind of a conversation partner program…I wouldn't know exactly where to start. You know, well, I worked with this client (L2 student) once a week and I wanted to, you know work on one grammatical aspect per week something like that…. I don't know. It's like I try to teach the language all together and it was overwhelming for me because I don't think I am qualified to do that." (Kelsey, undergraduate tutor, native English speaker)

"She (L2 student) keeps coming in like looking for help on a specific day but it's not like she is asking for help with her English, She's asking for help turning a secondary resource into a research paper. And it's like I still feel like obligated to help her try them kind of transfer into a research paper but I don't wanna be like 'Well actually we can't do this because you don't understand the sentence. You know what I mean. So what I mean, that's also difficult." (Olivia, graduate tutor, native English speaker)

As shown above, the difficulty the tutors experienced with the students who struggled to communicate and understand frustrated them and left them bewildered with respect to the actual work of the tutorial and what role they should play. Thus, the English language proficiency issue, which originated with the student tutees, impacted on both the students and their tutors and resulted in limited positive effects for the tutorials. This, in turn, could, fairly or unfairly, generate dissatisfaction among international

[4] This idea was corrected later by the coordinator so as to receive the student's consent first if they want to report to the instructor since the tutorial is a work between the tutor and the student. Tutors don't report about the student or the tutorial to the instructor without receiving the consent of the student.

students about both the role and value of Writing Center tutorials, just as the tutors were left frustrated and uncertain about what could be achieved.

Issue #2: Student's Incorrect Judgment about the Problems with their Writing

A second issue related to problems in tutorials involving the international students was the students' incorrect judgment about the problems with their writing. Some students went to the Writing Center with the belief that their paper had no problem other than grammar, and so they asked for help only about grammar mistakes. Those students usually arrived at the Writing Center at the last moment before having to submit their paper to the class for which it was written, and with a sense of urgency about the correctness of their grammar. Thus, if the tutor pointed out problems other than just grammar – higher-level problems such as flow and the organization of their arguments which require more significant revision in many cases - the students resisted addressing these issues and did not cooperate with the tutor in doing this unexpected work. In this way, the students did not value the tutor as someone who could evaluate their writing appropriately; they (the students) were more interested in their self-assessment of their writing. In the process, the students undermined the Writing Center's philosophy for writing instruction, "to produce better writers, not better writing" and lost the chance to become better writers. The case analysis that follows illustrates how the students' reliance on their own judgment of their writing had these effects.

Case #2: Surface Sorts of Things. The next transcript comes from an international undergraduate student's second visit to the Writing Center. Jiao is from China and is cute and friendly. After her first visit to the Writing Center, she said that she received an 'A'

for the initial draft of the paper that she had been working on for English 110. She made a second visit with her original draft on which she had received her instructor's comments and her revision. She needed to submit her revision that day. Steve, the tutor (graduate student and English native speaker, with 3 years of tutoring experience) has been providing suggestions on how to revise the original draft that the student showed initially to him based on what the instructor had asked for. Reading the instructor's comments as a reference[5], Steve makes suggestions for revision. When he is about to move in the text from paragraph to paragraph for detailed comments on the draft, Jiao takes out her revised version and says that she wants only proofreading for it.

Transcript 4-3

123	T:	I think at this point what that actually looks like ends up being
124		with what the argument is actually about (.) in any case (.2)
125		((with hand gesture)) what I would do here (.2) then (.2) is (.1)
126		you can try to structurally figure out which arguments are
127		working for him and which argument aren't (.1)
128	T:	U:m (1.4) ((T, looking at the paper)) clarifying the fact that- that this isn't-
129		he's not (.) shooting her(.) he's shooting(.) (h) um(.) her mom
130 ►	C:	((Takes out her revised version of the paper for the first time))
131		I have provided it (.2) and he said it's okay (.hh) =
132	T:	=Okay
133	C:	((C, pointing at the paper)) U:m, to revise the part ( ) is okay=
134	T:	=Okay so what- what can I – I mean it sounds to me like
135		you're still happy with your argument //and so: so-
136	C:	//((giggling))
137	T:	If you're- if you're- if you don't want (.1) to change your argument he-he
138 ►		Are you wanting me to just look at the surface // (0.4) sorts of things
139 ►	C:	//Ea::::yee:: U:::u:::aw::
140	T:	in terms of grammar and stuff? =
141	C:	=Y(.hh)e::yah=
142 ►	T:	=O(h)k(hh)a::y

[5] The tutor's basic approach to the course instructors in the relation with the tutee is not to be against them. So when the tutee brings his/her paper for revision with the instructor's comments (sometimes, grades as well) on it, the tutor begins reading the instructor's comments first and tries to help the tutee to understand the problem pointed out by the instructor, and based on the problems pointed out, the tutor provides the suggestions for revision.

143 C: ((giggling))=

In line 123, Steve gives Jiao an explanation one more time for what she needs to do to revise her paper based on the instructor's comments. Then he looks at the paper for 1.4 seconds and points to a line that has incorrect information and that should be fixed with reference to the story of the primary source, "Peter and the Wolf[6]", in line 129.

Jiao then takes out her revised draft for the first time in line 130. She says that she revised it and "he" (the instructor) said that it's okay in line 131. This is a decisive moment for the tutor. If, as Jiao claims, the revised draft is acceptable for the instructor, the tutor's relation to the task is transformed. If acceptable to the instructor, the tutor has no further work to do. This is his surmise in line 138, and Jiao confirms it in the next turn.

Steve in line 138 asks Jiao directly, "Are you wanting me to just look at the surface (0.4) sorts of things in terms of grammar and stuff?" Jiao agrees with him with an elongated stuttered "Y(.hhh)e::yah" in line 141. Steve accepts her answer, but with a grudging sense of disappointment in line 142. Jiao knows that Steve is not happy with her request for proofreading and giggles from guiltiness.

[6] The story begins with a family living in a small mountain cottage that is attacked and killed by wolves. After the attack, their newborn baby daughter was never found. Seven years later, Peter who is a cousin of the baby daughter spots her with a pack of wolves. He goes to get the girl with his father and grandmother. While taking the girl back, a large female wolf that is assumed to be the girl's "mother" attacks them and is killed by Peter's father.

Apparently, Steve is not happy with the idea that he should do proofreading and cautions Jiao about the instructor's comments. But he moves on anyway to proofreading in line 151. He does not have any other course of action to move on to at this moment.

Transcript 4-4

144	T:	=I think that-(.1) I think he has problems with things that are=
145	C:	=U:::hh
146	T:	deeper than that(.) based on him telling you (.) He said- well- he said
147		don't' do grammar until you take care of (.)these larger issues (.)
148		Now I guess if you think you can take care of them(.hh)
149		but then- then- we can- we can-
150		we can take a look at at- at- um um
151		((T, reading her paper line by line))
152		(10.0)
153	T:	Ah if mountains is plural(.) we want(.) in the mountains=
154	C:	=Uh
155	T:	So either in(.) with an s(.) or on(.) with a singular=
156	C:	=Uh
157	T:	Um because (.) it's just(.) spatially you can't be on (.)
158		more than one mountain=
159	C:	=U:h
160	T:	=At the same time which=
161	C:	=Uh yeah
162	T:	[sounds deeply philosophical
163	C:	[Yeah ((giggling))
164	T:	You cannot be on more than one mountain at the same time(.hhh)
165		Chu chu chu chu chu chu chu chu chu
166		((T, continue reading her paper in silence))
167		((C, looking at her other pages of her paper))

He points out grammar problems in line 153 and provides the corrections in line 155. Jiao marks her receipts in lines 154 and 156. Steve provides the explanation of the correction in lines 157-8. Jiao marks her receipts. Steve makes the explanation jokingly in line 162. Jiao giggles with agreement. Steve continues reading the paper and correcting the grammar.

As shown in this tutorial, Jiao brought her final draft and does not have any

intention to revise it any more. Based on the comments that she received from the instructor, she made a revision and came to the Writing Center to get only proofreading. Since her revision has already been done, Jiao refused Steve's suggestion for revision and asked just for proofreading. For Jiao, she has done her work – revision, and now she wants the Center to make her paper error-free. When the tutor is about to jump into the work for revising her paper, the student actually stops the tutor from giving help by refusing it with the reason that she does not need 'the help'. The revision has been done on her side. Her refusal shows what Jiao expects from the Center and how she thinks of the work of the Center, as a 'fix-it-shop'. She only wants a quick fix regarding grammar rather than learning about writing. Based on her pre-determined incorrect judgment about her writing and 'what help she would need for her paper', she refuses any additional work that the tutor suggests or would suggest.

This issue of the student's resistance for kinds of writing work was raised in the weekly Writing Center staff meeting as an example of a difficult case to deal with: specifically, those students who come to the Writing Center at the last moment before they submit a paper and subsequently offer resistance to the tutor's suggestions for revision. In this way, when the international students come to the Writing Center with a pre-established and incorrect belief about their writing, they do not value the tutor's expertise and lose the chance to work on and improve their paper. In this way the core mission of the Writing Center is compromised, and tutors are left in the difficult position of providing feedback that they recognize as limited in scope. The fact that the Writing Center staff discussed this case as representative of an ongoing problem they had with at least some international students testifies to the significance of the issue.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #2. The overarching issue is the student's assumption that the only concern regarding her paper is surface level matters, regardless of commentary to the contrary on the part of her instructor and her tutor. Also important is the timing of her visit to the Writing Center: just before submitting the paper. By acting in this way, she further prevented possibilities for meaningful learning from the tutorial. But there were some points in the instructional conversation that were critical to how the tutorial session evolved. For example, in lines 138, 140, 142, 144 and 146-150, the tutor had an opportunity to insist on focusing on the deeper writing issues but left the decision on whether to focus on those deeper issues up to the student. In lines 131, 133, 136, 139,141 and 143, the student had an opportunity to take the advice the tutor appeared willing to provide on deeper issues, but instead declined. In each case, then, it was the student's inaccurate or limited assessment of her paper that shaped the instructional interaction.

Another conversational move that is revealing is that the student used the talk with her instructor about the revision to support her judgment. Other than the instructor's comments on the original draft, the personal talk that the student had with her instructor occurred in the tutor's absence. The student insists on her own judgment based on the conversation with the instructor that the tutor does not know about in any detail. As a result, the tutor's hands were tied and there was no additional tutorial work to do, but this was once again shaped by the student's judgment, not the tutor's.

Moving beyond this specific case, for the writing tutorials with L2 students, deciding on which concern to address first between the surface-level problems and the higher-level problems is a matter of debate. Usually, the tutor sets the hierarchy of

concerns from the higher-order content (requirements of assignment, organization, structure, etc.) to the lower-order content (clarity, accuracy, etc.). When they are asked to only check grammar, which seemingly is a routine request from L2 students or first time visitors, they have to negotiate with the student in terms of the priority of the work. This puts tutors in an awkward position in which their authority or expertise has been subverted.

Natalie, who had been tutoring for over 3 years in the Writing Center as a graduate student in English, shared her idea about this issue. She explained that when the student asks for help for only grammar problems, she usually tries to find a pattern in their grammar mistakes and discusses it instead of correcting each mistake. Then she said, "They (L2 students) want to focus on their lower-level problems but there are bigger problems." However, as the case above illustrates, these larger problems are not necessarily a matter of concern to L2 students. The tutor has to negotiate on what to focus and how to work with the resisting students, which is not easy work. When the negotiation for consensus for the work fails, either the tutor just follows what the student wants, or, as a worst case, the student leaves the cubicle.

The way that the tutor sees the student's paper is different from the way that the student sees their paper, and the Writing Center exists in part in the belief that its staff are in a better position to assess student writing than students and then to provide adequate help for the student writers. However, students' incorrect judgments about their writing that are narrowly defined within the lower-order problems are bound to lead to tensions and conflicts between the tutor and the students in their negotiation of how to do the work of the tutorial. Here it should be noted that, as second language learners, it may be

understandable for L2 writers to fixate on grammatical issues, as they are still in the process of acquiring that grammar. Those are understandably the problems they most easily notice, and they may well be the problems that instructors most commonly draw to their attention, thus heightening their importance in the eyes of the L2 students. This situation could distort their self-assessment of their writing, leaving little room for consideration of higher order writing issues. When it happens, usually the students become the victim of their own incorrect or unbalanced judgment of their writing. Concerning this difficulty with ESL students, during the Writing Center's annual orientation session for the novice tutors, reversing the hierarchy from the lower-order to the higher-order concerns was suggested as one way to work, particularly with international students. This reflects the Writing Center's awareness of and concern about the issue and the difficulties the issue raises for the tutors.

Issue #3: Lack of Understanding of Academic Writing

A third issue that emerged during the data analysis was the international students' lack of understanding of academic writing in the U.S. educational context. Many international students come to college in the United States without any practical experience of L2 academic writing. The lack of writing experience confuses them in understanding what academic writing is and how to complete writing assignments effectively. They are simultaneously trying to learn about academic writing in English while having to perform that writing, not to mention still being learners of the language. This is a considerable burden to bear, especially while also taking classes and adjusting to

a new culture and educational system. In many cases, they struggle both in vernacular writing and academic writing. Sometimes they do not even differentiate between the two. Their lack of experience of either vernacular or academic writing causes them to become confused about what to do and how to do it for academic writing. Their confusion becomes a more critical problem when they encounter the actual writing assignments in their classes. They carry all of these variables with them during their Writing Center tutorials, thus generating a complex interactional dynamic during the tutorials. Case #3, which is discussed in this section of the chapter, highlights this complexity.

Case # 3: "What Would You Say That You Are Wanting to Argue?" In the next transcript, I will show a case of an international student who confuses the concepts of "making an argument" and "summarizing". Minsoo is from South Korea, an undergraduate, first time visitor to the Writing Center. He came with his analytic research paper (ARP) from his English 110 class. He was a quiet and polite young man. The tutor, Claire, in this case is a graduate student in English and a native English speaker. She was very personable and friendly and had been tutoring for 2 years in the Writing Center. As the tutorial develops, Claire finds that Minsoo does not have a thesis statement and has a problem in understanding what to write for his paper. She has provided an explanation of what an argument is and how to make an argument. Despite all of her effort, however, Minsoo's confusion about what it means to make an argument continues to the end of the tutorial. Here it should be noted that argumentative writing can be especially challenging for L2 writers because of cultural differences in such writing. Argument is as much a cultural act as it is a rhetorical one, with argumentative patterns and practices sometimes differing considerably across cultures. Thus, when facing argumentative writing in

English, L2 writers may be operating with very different ideas rooted in their native language and cultural background.

Transcript 4-5

84	T:	U: m (.2) So(.) I eh really see you don't necessarily have a thesis now.
85 ►		So what would you say that you are wanting to argue(.) at this point?
86	C:	Hm I was going to concentrate on the difference between diff- difference
87		between U.S. government and (BP Oil) company(.) about compensation
88	T:	Okay (.2) BP Oil about compensation
89		((T, taking notes on a memo pad))
90	T:	Now(.) Um you know
91		maybe this is already (.) clear to you(.) I am not sure(.)
92		but (.) you know I think that this is (.) a very interesting topic
93		the one concern that you probably have to look out for……
⋮		. . .
106 ►	T:	U:m so you know are you- are you actually wanting to take a stance
107 ►		at this point on what you see as the right course to take?
108 ►		Or (.1) like have you thought about that?
109	C:	A:h(h) the according to- to the primary source(.)=
110	T:	=hm hm=
111	C:	=BP trying to show (.) what they are doing right now
112		for the compensation=
⋮		. . .
118 ►	T:	Well(.) one thing we do have to keep in mind (.)
119		as you're trying to figure out what your argument is-
120		Is that your primary purpose is to make an argument
121		based on analyzing (.) the source (.) right?
122	C:	Okay
123 ►	T:	I- Is that correct with-?
124 ►	C:	Yeah(h)=
125	T:	=Okay(.) So u:m
126		You know the source that you read (.) u:m
127	C:	My primary source?=
128	T:	=Yeah the primary source that you read (.)
129 ►		Do you feel like it's slanted or biased at all? Did you get that sense? Or-
130	C:	Not really
131	T:	Not really (.) okay

Noticing that Minsoo does not have a thesis statement, Claire has provided an explanation about what an argument is and what is an analytic research paper (ARP),

which is his writing assignment. Having provided the explanation of 'what making an argument is', Claire now asks Minsoo, in line 85, what he wants to argue for in his paper. Minsoo begins to talk about the dispute between BP Oil and the US government that he read about from the newspaper, *The Korea Herald* (his primary source), focusing on the difference of their positions. Instead of making an argument, Minsoo is continuously trying to summarize what their dispute is about (lines 86-87). Claire writes that down on her memo pad and then goes back to talk about an "argument" until line 105.

Having provided the explanation, Claire delicately asks Minsoo if he is prepared to 'take a stance... at this point' in lines 106-8. An 'argument' is more than a topic and entails 'taking a stance'. Claire explains that an argument entails taking a 'stance' on a topic. But to this, in line 109, Minsoo returns to talk about his primary source text, which is an article about gulf oil spill compensation. Minsoo still seems to be confused about the difference between constructing an argument and summarizing a primary source.

Claire in lines 118-121 returns to the explanation of 'what an argument is' with a following tag question, "Right?" for an understanding check. She is working to secure agreements about the task of making an argument *about* the primary source. Minsoo agrees with her, but with no uptake. Another understanding check follows in line 123. Claire seems unsure about Minsoo's understanding. Again, Minsoo agrees with her one more time, but still with no uptake reflecting actual understanding.

Claire mentions the source Minsoo read (line 126), and Minsoo asks a repair question in line 127. Minsoo's question is being repaired by Claire with an agreement in line 128. Then in line 129, Claire asks a question to assess his understanding about 'making an argument about the primary source' (lines 120-121), which was agreed with

by Minsoo. From Minsoo's reply in line 130, it turns out that he does not understand 'making an argument'. Claire repeats Minsoo's reply and accepts it. The tutor has been explaining about 'making an argument about the primary source', and it shows that the student has no argument to make with his primary source and no stance on it, either. He is still simply summarizing the primary source. Whether this is due to a lack of understanding of argumentation in English or reliance on a different notion of it within his native language and culture (where summarizing could reflect taking a stance) is difficult to say, but the bottom line is that the student is struggling, despite the tutor's efforts to be helpful.

In the next sequence in transcript 4-6 below, Claire then moves to Minsoo's paper and reads the first paragraph. She moves her questioning from 'arguing' to 'analyzing' and asks Minsoo's opinion about the BP website to see whether it fits his assignment. But Minsoo still does not seem to understand the questions about "argument" and fails to produce any argument about his primary source, this time based on a website.

Transcript 4-6

132 ►	T:	Well- let me go ahead and take a look at what you've got
133	C:	[*Al-right*
134	T:	[We are gonna have to keep in mind alright you're gonna need to make an
135		argument (.) about the primary source
136	C:	((nodding))
⋮		. . .
142		((T, reading the paper)) *Now that the oil spill is stopped*
143		*it seems that BP focuses on taking responsibility for those who in need*
144		*The main page of B.P web site is…*
⋮		. . .
154	T:	Okay so (.) Are you analyzing their website?
155	C:	Yeah
156	T:	Okay u:m so hm do you feel like the website is (1.0) well done?

157 Or poorly done?
158 C: Ah I think they did a good job
159 ► T: Okay so um since this is an analyzing the primary source
160 ► then you might be able to analyze their primary source
161 ► based on the website (.) Have you considered that?
162 C: Ah- no because I'm not(.2) I am not focusing whose wrong or whose
163 right. So- I don't think-(0.8) there's anyone wrong between ( ) the
164 administration
165 ► T: (.hh) Right. And actually I am moving away from that idea now(.2)
166 to talk about just the source (.) right=because you are gonna
167 end up making an argument about (.) the source overall right?
168 So one (.) possible like avenue you can take (.)
169 if you feel like that fits the assignment would be to like
170 make a claim(.) about how effective the website is.
171 ► Do you- do you understand what I am saying?
172 C: ((nodding))
173 T: Like- you know(.) you can talk about many different aspects of the
174 website(.) Like- information (.) or color theme(.) or the features…

. . .

180 ► T: So what are your thoughts as far as what sort of argument you might
181 ► be able to make (.) about that (.) website?
182 C : (3.5) hmmm ((touching his nose and giggling))

Claire now moves to his paper and reassures him that an 'argument' argues about something, and Minsoo nods in agreement. Claire reads out loud the first paragraph of the text and asks a question in line 154. She now re-frames the task of 'arguing' as one of 'analyzing', "Are you analyzing their website?" Minsoo says he is, and further that his analysis is supportive of the website (line 158). Claire asks if he has considered any analysis of how the BP website aligns with the primary source (lines 159-161), and Minsoo says that he finds no fault with either side, which indicates that there is no argument to make, or that Minsoo, operating within a different cultural understanding of argument, sees taking a middle ground between the two sides as a kind of argument. Thus, in his mind, he may feel that he in fact is taking a stance, albeit a neutral one that embraces both sides of the issue.

Claire then looks for a next possible 'argument' that could be made in the reading, about 'how effective the website is' in line 170, and whether or not this task would 'fit the assignment' in line 169. She then asks an explicit comprehension check question in line 171, and receives a nodding agreement in 172. With the nodding agreement, Claire now makes a suggestion for an argument about the effectiveness of the website itself, and how, in that way, Minsoo might find an argument to make. She receives a giggle in return in line 182, or a weak agreement.

As it is shown, the student in this tutorial continuously misunderstood what an 'argument' is and 'what making an argument is' and confused that with the idea of 'summarizing the primary source'. The tutor had to explain 'argument' and 'summary' over and over until the end of the tutorial. The lack of understanding of academic writing hinders any real progress during the tutorial. Here the tutor has been given the added instructional load of not just helping the student strengthen the paper, but also trying to explain the complex cultural entity called argument as well as its use in academic English. This is, to say the least, an imposing task within the time limitations of a single tutorial session. The source of this difficult challenge is the international students' underdeveloped notion of academic writing in English.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #3. The noticeable conversational moves in transcripts 4-5 show that the tutor continuously revises her questions. After the tutor asks the student what argument he wants to make, she notices that the student has no idea of what making an argument is. Conceptual understanding itself is lacking. Before she attempts the same request –'what argument do you want to make?' – for the tutorial, the tutor provides an explanation of what making an argument is with some mitigating

supportive moves to prepare her request (see lines 90-91, 118). After failing to receive his argument from the two attempts (see lines 85, 106-108), she begins to ask 'yes/no questions' about making an argument, which makes the student's answers clear (see lines 120-121, 123, 129). The yes/no questions made the problem – the student does not understand 'making an argument' – clear.

The tutor moves on to work with his paper to instruct him in transcript 4-6. The tutor asks three 'yes/no questions' (see lines 154, 156-157) to make her questions easy to answer; then she attempts to ask about his argument again by changing the term, 'argumenting' to 'analyzing' (see lines 159-161) but still failed to get an answer. The tutor tries one more explanation with the mitigating supportive moves (line 165) and asks one more time about his thoughts for an argument (lines 180-181). The student still struggles in answering. He seems to have no idea what to say. The student shows enough fluency to communicate with the tutor, but he never forms an idea of what 'augmenting' is. The tutor provided many different ways to instruct him in what an argument is, but each attempt failed. This highlights the difficulty involved in trying to do more than a tutorial session allows when the tutee lacks crucial conceptual understanding necessary to have a productive dialogue about how to address the writing problems in the paper under discussion. There simply is not the time or space necessary in one tutorial to overcome the conceptual barrier that exists on the part of the student.

Writing an academic paper in a second language is challenging work, even when the student possesses a good deal of understanding of such writing. To do so while taking English 110 as a first year undergraduate in a new educational and cultural setting is truly an imposing challenge, especially with a complicated task like writing a research paper.

In acknowledgement of this situation, visiting the Writing Center at any stage of working on their research papers is a course requirement. Of the various challenges of writing a research paper in a second language, one of the most difficult is to be able to understand the concept of the purpose of the paper and how to organize ideas in the paper. Brief tutorial sessions in the Writing Center are not likely to overcome this problem.

To illustrate the challenges faced by Case #3, another student from English 110 said, "Ah, I mean, this really, I had no idea what it is about. The other stuff [7], I could do (the paper) after reading (the instruction) and thinking of how to write, but this paper, I really had no idea what they ask me to do." (Dongwon from South Korea, an undergraduate from English 110 and a first time visitor to the Writing Center. Translated from Korean.) The research paper is an especially demanding academic writing challenge, including the argumentative component it contains. Hence, there was no surprise in seeing it present the challenges it did during the Writing Center tutorials, with the tutors placed in a particularly challenging situation due to the international students' generally limited understanding of academic writing in English.

Understanding the idea of making an argument, developing a thesis statement, and supporting their argument using primary and secondary sources constitute understanding what an academic research paper is and what to do to fulfill the requirement of such a writing assignment. A lack of understanding of what the academic paper is about and what it should look like can confuse international students to the point where they aren't even sure of what to ask the tutors to help them with. Misunderstanding

[7] English 110 has several different writing projects that the students have to finish. This student is talking about the "Analytic Research Paper (ARP)' that he had problems understanding what to do for the assignment.

what help they have to seek for their writing assignment can become a critical issue that prevents international students from getting adequate help from the Writing Center. Furthermore, in addition to having to teach complex conceptual understanding of the elements entailed in research paper writing, such as constructing an argument, the tutors have to try to anticipate the kinds of questions international students would like to ask but cannot. This results in a double burden for the tutors. Hence, both the students and tutors are at a disadvantage during the tutorial sessions while the international students struggle to grasp the fundamentals of academic writing in English.

Issue #4: Negotiating the Actual Work of Writing Center Tutorials

A fourth issue that arose from the data analysis was that the international students often lacked understanding of the work (or on a larger scale, the overall mission) of the Writing Center. This is, in some ways, perhaps the most significant issue that exists in exploring international students' participation in writing center tutorials. Unlike the domestic students, many international students come to the U.S. without having experienced or even heard of something called a writing center where assistance in writing is provided. Thus, for international students, interaction with a writing center begins with trying to understand the writing center construct itself, followed by learning the specifics of seeking and receiving help from one. Due to this lack of knowledge of and experience with a writing center, some of them come to the center thinking of it as a 'fix-it-shop' where they can get a grammar check or any immediate help to make their paper better; this is the notion that appears most logical to them. Therefore, when they

find that they cannot get immediate help to make their paper better, they may become disappointed. This has two likely effects. One, it may interfere with their approach to the tutorials they receive. Two, once they are disappointed about the help that they wanted but did not get, they may not come back for later visits, seeing no valid reason for doing so. As a result, the chances for future assistance to improve their writing and become better writers are missed.

What this situation highlights is the need for international students to decode, and then try to adjust to, the actual nature of writing center tutorials. This is essential if they are to derive benefits from the tutorials. Some fail to do this and experience the effects described earlier: struggling with and perhaps resisting the flow of tutorials, or never returning, even if they need help with future writing assignments. Others find a way to mediate and adapt to the actual work of writing centers. The case described below illustrates how one international student experienced confusion about Writing Center policy but was able to navigate the policy as the tutorial proceeded.

Case #4: "We don't proofread." The next transcript involves an undergraduate, international student who came to the Writing Center with his paper from the English 110 class. Sang-Jin is from South Korea and this was his first visit to the Writing Center. The tutor, Bill was a graduate student and native English speaker who had tutored for 3 years in the Writing Center at that point. Sang-Jin very quickly asked for a grammar check from the tutor, and his request was rejected immediately.

Transcript 4-7

1		T:	Okay So (.2) Wh<u>a</u>t are we workin o:n?
2	►	C:	I'm taking a: <u>E</u>nglish one hunduredu cra:ss
3		T:	Ok<u>a</u>y

4 ► C: A:n (.1) in- in the crass a- I hav- so:m (.2) a- assignment
5 ► an I- I hav tu: I have tu: visit here an get tutorial (.)
6 ► this is (.) e::h the- the mission in the crass
7 T: Um-hm
8 ► C: (.) An so: (.1) this is the shilabus
9 T: Okay
10 ► C: ((C, takes out the syllabus and points at the line)) Here (3.0)
11 ((reading from his syllabus)) *(Over here)* must have visid-id
12 the riting center an least one riting state (.1) (.h)
13 [So now- now(.)
14 T: [Okay so thisiz- but thisiz- for English one ten=
15 C: =Yes
16 T: And you are in one ten?=
17 C: =Yes
18 T: (.hh) OK (.)
19 C: ((C. puts the syllabus back in the folder and takes out his paper out))
20 A::n the(.3) This- my(.) full page drafut=
21 T: =Okay
22 ► C: I- I- I wana:: a: get tutorial (.1) wi- *the-* eh- cheking(.) e:h- grammar=

In line 1, Bill asks 'why are you here?' Sang-Jin's formulations of 'why I'm here' follow in lines 2, 4-6 and 8. He introduces his class, the assignment he brought along, and the requirement of visiting the Writing Center for a tutorial. Then he pulls out his syllabus. Bill gives him continuers in lines 3, 7 and 9. Sang-Jin shows the syllabus to Bill and reads out loud the line saying that visiting the Writing Center is required. Then he initiates his formulation to a conclusive summary in line 13, "So now- now(.)" and it is overlapped with the Bill's receipt of Sang-Jin's formulation. Bill in line 14 begins to check his understanding of Sang-Jin's 'why I'm here' explanation.

Bill checks the class that Sang-Jin came from as "English one ten". The students from English 110 are a major part of the clientele of the Writing Center, especially given the assignment to have at least one tutorial there. Bill is familiar with the class and their writing assignments. Sang-Jin replies to him immediately with agreement. Bill is making

sure of the class name as “one ten” (line 16), not “one hundred” as Sang-Jin introduced in line 2. Again, Sang-Jin replies to him immediately with agreement. Bill accepts it with confirmation. Then in line 19, Sang-Jin takes out his paper and introduces it as his “full page draft” in line 20. Followed by Bill’s confirmation about his draft, Sang-Jin directly indicates how he wants to be helped: it is to ‘get a tutorial that will check his grammar’ in line 22.

However, what Sang-Jin requested, which is perfectly reasonable from his perspective, is a task the Writing Center does not perform, which Sang-Jin must have not known. Bill immediately refuses the request by saying “We don’t proofread” (line 23).

Transcript 4-8

22	C:	I- I- I wana:: a: get tutorial (.1) wi- *the-* eh- cheking(.) e:h- gramm<u>a</u>r=
23	T:	=Okay (.) We d<u>o</u>n’t proofread (.1)
24		U:m we can talk about grammar but we-l have to actually
25		talk about (.) the grammar
26	T:	U:m (.3) Ok<u>a</u>y(.) <u>O</u>th<u>e</u>r than grammar(.)
27		What ar- do you have any concerns about this particular paper?
28 ►	C:	H:m hm (h) um- uh- <u>u</u>sually u::h I- I’m conpusing to use some-some
29 ►		berb grammar (.) u:m maybe (.5)
30 ►		Pas- e:h the pas- p<u>a</u>st (.) a:n da: presen(.) an puture
31	T:	Um-hm
32 ►	C:	An a- a- alreiz conpuzing for ex<u>a</u>mple h<u>a</u>v<u>e</u> b<u>ee</u>n(.) a:n da habin pipi (.5)
33 ►		A:n da tsa(.)So (.3)
34 ►		In the- In the p<u>o</u>int I- I- I wanna get tutorial

Instead, Bill gives an explanation for the rejection of the request concerning what they can do with grammar, which is that he “has to actually talk about the grammar”. Having rejected the request of checking grammar, Bill introduces what the Writing Center policy permits regarding grammar. Sang-Jin still has not formulated his request in a way that allows Bill to help relative to what the Writing Center can provide. Bill’s next

question in lines 26-27 goes back to the same type of initiating question in line 1, "do you have any concerns about this particular paper?" Bill now is giving Sang-Jin another opportunity to answer the question following the rejection of line 23. Sang-Jin now reformulates his concerns and talks about grammar, specifically about 'verb tense', "past and present and future" (line 29-30) and "have been p.p." (line 32). Sang-Jin revises how he wants to be helped in a way acceptable to Bill and makes a specific request for his concerns about grammar. The ability to do so represents an example of success that is important to see but, at the same time, is not common enough among international student clients. Many struggle with, and even resist, the Writing Center's refusal to provide the kind of grammatical editing they want most.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #4. Like other English 110 students, visiting the Writing Center with his paper was also a class requirement for this student. When he asks for a grammar check, the tutor rejects the request immediately and gives him a suggestion of what they can do with grammar instead of proofreading (see lines 23-24). The student revises his request to the tutor's suggestion and they moved on to talk about the grammar – English verb tense. However, not all the students in this study adjusted their request, and thus their approach, immediately like this student did. Some of them became angry upon learning that they could not receiving proofreading, which was their only reason for visiting the Writing Center, and some of them even left the Writing Center when it became apparent that they would not receive the 'fix it' work they wanted done. For them, the Writing Center was not perceived as place of learning; it was only about repairing what was wrong at the sentence level. This is an aspect of international student participation in writing center interactions that is essential to understand if writing

centers are to develop positive, learning-oriented relationships with them. Knowing that many international student clienteles may come to the writing center with unrealistic or inaccurate expectations of what will occur during tutorials is an important first step in making the tutorials successful.

Regarding the less successful tutorials arising from this kind of situation, one of the tutors shared her experience about a student's misunderstanding of the work of the writing center. Mandy said, "He asked me to check his grammar on his paper and I said we don't proofread. He seemed to be upset and asked me, 'Then (If you don't proofread), what do you do here?' and left the room immediately." (Mandy, graduate tutor with 2 years experience, native English speaker) It appears that this is not an uncommon experience. Even those students who stay may do so with a negative attitude toward what happens, thereby limiting the effectiveness of the tutorials.

Rejecting a request for what they can't provide is a moment that the tutors have to handle with caution and patience, especially if the question comes from a student's genuine misunderstanding of the work of the center. An impatient or insensitive refusal to grant the student's request for grammatical repair work, however unfair that request may be, can set a tone of defeat for the tutorial interaction that cannot be reversed. Though the problem originates on the student's side, with a misunderstanding of what writing centers do (even though the policies are normally readily available), the burden for overcoming this problem begins with the tutor. With the right approach, as seen earlier in the handling of Case #4 where the student eventually bought into what the tutor was trying to do grammatically, the tutorial can become beneficial.

The question that Mandy heard from the student, "Then (If you don't proofread),

what do you do here?" clearly shows the misunderstanding that the students (both international and domestic) can have about the work of a writing center. Experienced and effective tutors probably learn to anticipate that question and reaction on the part of students, and thus know how to respond accordingly. However, many tutors are not in that situation, thus making it more difficult for successful negotiation of the work of a writing center to occur.

Indeed, the following exchange I had with a tutor who had worked in the Writing Center for 3 years reveals the kinds of tensions that can arise when what students want and what tutors provide is not aligned:

> I think they just become more clever. They know what we're not gonna go ahead and do (proofreading).….The confrontation isn't gonna be direct, 'I want proofreading and me, saying 'No I'm not doing proofreading'. You know, there's the coded language. I'm worried, you know about, you know my grammar, or I'm worried about whether I make sense. Or I 'm worried about whether this flows right. And really all of this acts as code for proofread for my grammar…. If it is a first or second time visitor, I don't give them what they want. I want them to think about all the issues and patterns of their writing in their organization of the paper. But if they have been working several times back and forth and visiting the center with the same paper, I do check their grammar as a reward. But for the visitor who comes at the last moment before the due date, I don't give them what they want….I wanna say to them in this way. They can't get what they want unless they follow my rules (rules of the writing center). If they want to get what they want, they have to play by my rules." (Cynthia, graduate tutor with 3 years experience, native

English speaker)

In these comments we see how, from the tutor's perspective, the students' unawareness of, and perhaps insensitivity to, the Writing Center's policy on how to approach papers generates frustration on their part. The tutor's insistence on students 'playing by her/his rules' reveals how deeply this frustration may run. It also suggests how important it is for this issue to be addressed meaningfully in helping international students construct an appropriate understanding of the work of the Writing Center.

Issue #5: English as a Sign of Competence and Intelligence

International students are those who have often studied English not for general communication, but only for academic purposes. This is likely how it was taught to them as well in their home country, probably over a period of several years. Given the growth of the importance of English internationally, students' success in their English courses and examinations is an important marker of their overall success. For them, English is not just a foreign language. It is viewed as a sign of individual accomplishment, competence, and intelligence. This is a mental framework many international students bring with them when they study abroad in an Anglophone setting. In this light, writing center tutors' comments about their writing are seen through the lens of personal pride. There is, then, an important affective domain to tutorial interaction, and this can sometimes interfere with such interaction and prevent international students from getting help from the writing center. They do not want to look incompetent to the tutor. Specifically, many international students who enroll in four year universities in the U.S. are academically intelligent and highly motivated students in their home countries. This individual

background as a successful, even superior, student, and a strong belief about their English ability and an association with overall intelligence, can hinder their efforts in seeking and accepting help for their writing. The next case illustrates the complexities of this situation, which the study suggested is not an uncommon one.

Case #5: "I am not sure if I can visit here again" The next transcript is that of an undergraduate, international student who visited the Writing Center to fulfill the English 110 requirement of making at least one visit to the center. This tutorial was introduced earlier in this chapter in Case #3 but is now seen in the context of the student's affective realm. The tutor has been explaining about 'making an argument' and 'summarizing'. The student has a hard time to understand the differences between the two. The tutor had to re-explain over and over about what argument is. But despite the tutor's effort, the student didn't seem to understand clearly. This is the ending sequence of this tutorial.

Before closing the tutorial, the tutor, Claire asks the due date for the assignment and then if Minsoo has enough time to revise his draft. Minsoo answers that he can talk with his professor, and without being asked, says that he is not sure if he can come back to the center.

Transcript 4-9

550	T:	Okay (.) (.hh) So(.2) um (.3) when is this due?
551	C:	Sorry about that?
552	T:	When is your assignment due?
553	C:	Oh it's (.3) due: fourteenth(.2) //Saturday
554	T:	//Okay
555	T:	Okay So u:m do you think that u would have time to sort of like (.3)
556		work on this little bit further:r and then talk with your professor?
557		Or- or probably not
558 ►	C:	I can talk with my professor (.2) I am not sure if I can visit here=
559	T:	=Right=
560	C:	=again after (.3) write about things =

561 T: =Right (.2)
562 ► That's=understandable we have very packed schedule// this week too
563 C: //((laugh))

Minsoo initiates a repair question in line 551, and Claire changes the "due" with "your assignment due". Minsoo provides the due date. Then Claire asks him if he would have time to work on his revision and talk with his professor (lines 555-556). Claire is asking if he can get help from the professor about his draft, since she had a hard time explaining about 'making an argument'. Minsoo says that he can talk with his professor, and, without being asked, he says that he is not sure if he can visit the center again with his revision (lines 558 and 560). He can talk with his professor about the draft but cannot visit the center. He indirectly gives a refusal in advance for the potential invitation from the tutor for a next visit. Claire gives him immediate agreements without gap or any overlap in the transition (lines 559 and 561) and offers him a conciliatory reply by mentioning the packed schedule of the center that week (the end of the quarter) in line 562. Beyond that, Claire wants to make sure if Minsoo has an idea of what to do to revise his draft after this tutorial.

Transcript 4-10
564 T: Um(.2) but I would like you to feel like you (.) kind of walk away
565 from here knowing(.3) what you feel you wanna do next=
566 C: =Oh alright
567 ► T: So (.3) what is it that you(.2) think you wanna do next (.)
568 ► as you revise this?
569 C: U:::m(.8) maybe: (.8) Friday(.8) Friday ((C looks at the tutor))
570 T: Um(.3) I me:an- what (.) step (.) will you take //as you revise this?=
571 C: //O:h
578 =Oh you mean right now?=
579 T: =You know when- when you start to: change it (.)
580 when you start to revise it (.2) what will you do first?
581 C: Um (.1) actually(.) I changed my introduction (.3) last night
582 T: Hm hm

583 C: A:nd
584 T: Okay
585 C: And (.5) I really needed (.2) thesis I can work it (2.3) //tomorrow
586 T: //Okay
587 C: *because I got lot of things today so*=
588 ► T: =Okay(.2) (.hh)
589 So I am looking at this last sentence of your introduction
590 that you said that you do(.) did (.) and you say at the end (.)
591 and BP seems they're trying to their looking better about showing people
592 they are struggling for the compensation ( ) inside(.2)
593 You mentioned that you weren't sure of how you make a thesis
594 but it looks very much like a thesis
595 C: Really
596 T: (.h) Um because (.3)
597 ► Can you explain to me what you were saying in the latter half (.2)
598 ► like in your words? What is that they were saying here?
599 C: (1.3) um I'm talking about the difference expectation about compensation
600 between the U.S. government and BP
601 T: Okay(.)

. . .

650 T: So(.2) you are actually (.) maybe further than you are realized
651 C: Hm(.) Maybe ((light-laugh))

Claire in line 567 asks him directly what he wants to do next for a revision of his paper. She is trying to wrap up this tutorial and make sure that Minsoo has some understanding of what to do to make an argument for his paper. But Minsoo misunderstands Claire's question and answers, 'Friday'. Minsoo seems to understand the question as 'when can he revise the paper'. Claire finds that Minsoo misunderstood her question and revises her question in line 570. Her response is delayed with a hesitant filler word "um," and then she changes her word choice to "what(.) step(.) will you take" with a brief pause between the words, "what" and "step". Minsoo notices that there is something wrong in his answer and shows recognition of his mistake in line 571 with the overlapping "O:h". But he is still not clear what mistake he made. His question to clarify

the tutor's question follows immediately in line 578, "Oh you mean right now?", without any gap or overlap after the tutor's response.

Claire also notices that her question was not delivered correctly. She revises her question again in lines 579-580 by repeating "when you start to change it (.) when you start to revise it" with the use of two different words, 'change' and 'revise'. Minsoo answers that he changed his introduction in line 581. It's not clear if Minsoo now understands what Claire is asking. Claire gives him continuers in lines 582-584. Minsoo answers that he needs a thesis and he can work on it the next day in line 585. As soon as Minsoo says that he needs to work on a thesis, Claire overlaps him, saying "Okay". Minsoo's reason why he cannot do the work today follows in line 587. He answers that he needs a thesis, as they have been talking about it for the whole time during the session; but other than that, he does not say what he needs to do to make his thesis, which is the argument for his paper. Instead of saying what to do to make an argument, he gives his plan of when to do it with an excuse that he cannot do it right then or that day.

Claire notices that Minsoo still has no idea about what to do to make an argument. In line 588, she goes ahead and looks at his introduction and begins to talk about it. She pinpoints the last sentence of his introduction as a potential candidate for his thesis statement and asks him what he meant. Claire tries to develop the thesis statement from his writing directly by pointing out one sentence and asking him to talk about it (lines 589-594, 596-598). Then, from the sentence and his reply, she picks out key words for his thesis statement and helps him to move on from them to develop his thesis statement (lines 602-649, omitted from the transcript). Claire wraps up the tutorial by giving him

encouragement for his progress (line 650) but Minsoo seems not quite clear about his progress. He answers, “Maybe” with a light laugh.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #5. When the tutor asks about the due date and the work after revising the paper, the student indicates that perhaps he will not be able to come back to the center. This was a difficult tutorial for both of them. As shown in transcripts 4-9 and 4-10, the student seems to have closed the work of his paper in this tutorial even before the tutor wraps it up. After expressing his reluctance to come back to the center (lines 558, 560), to the questions about what his next move should be for revising his paper, the student talks about his schedule to do it and the need to make his thesis – which they had been working on the whole tutorial but failed to develop (see lines 569, 578, 581, 585 and 587). His answers show that he felt he did not get the help he needed to make his thesis statement and is reluctant to come back for further work on his paper. His answer caused the tutor to return to his paper and directly point to the line that may be able to be his thesis statement (lines 588-594) and resumed the instruction to make his thesis statement.

During the tutorial, the tutor spent a long time explaining the difference between ‘argumenting’ and ‘paraphrasing’ over and over, and this may be where the affective domain entered the picture from the student’s perspective. In response to the tutor’s questions about his argument, the student’s answers always began with what his resource was about instead of producing his argument. The student’s answers suggest that he had a problem understanding what an argument is, and that led the tutor to keep going back to explain this to him. At the end of the tutorial, the tutor became tired of repeating the same explanation, and by this time the student had seemingly given up on the tutorial. It is not

clear what interfered with his understanding about making an argument. He might simply have failed to understand the concept of making an argument. Or he might have thought that producing his own argument for a thesis statement is something that he needed to work on individually, instead of working with the tutor collaboratively, causing him to resist producing one during the tutorial.

What also may be happening is that, the more the tutor tries to straighten out the argument issue, the more the student may feel that what the tutor is really doing in his persistence on this issue is questioning the student's English and his intelligence. From the student's point of view, as someone who has spent years studying English and who was good enough at it to be admitted to a prestigious American university, the tutor's persistence may have become humiliating from his perspective. It suggests that he is incapable of overcoming the problem, and this may have led to his reluctance to schedule another tutorial. To do so could be seen as an admission on his part that he lacked the ability or intelligence to sort this problem out on his own. Meanwhile, looking at this from the tutor's side of the interaction, it appears that the tutor fails to understand the student's emotional investment in his English writing and how the student's pride may be damaged by her sincere efforts to help the student address the problem, thus limiting the tutor's ability to be effective.

Visiting a writing center with a writing assignment can create a double-burden for international students. First, they have talk about their writing in English, a language they're still learning but already have a considerable investment in. And they are doing so with a tutor who is a stranger in terms of not knowing about the assignment being discussed or the student's own background with respect to English. This situation creates

a complex dynamic in the tutorial interaction. That leads to the second part of the burden: international students are taking a risk in showing their weaknesses, mistakes, and struggles in English to a stranger. This puts them in a vulnerable position in which they stand to 'lose face', especially if they struggle in the ways Case #5 did. In this way, when they realize that they cannot get the help that they expected for their time and effort, the emotional sensitivity about their English ability as a signifier of personal competence and intelligence compounds their participation in the tutorials. This, in turn, can make them afraid of coming back to the center, as may have occurred with Case #5. The more the tutor wanted him to return for another tutorial, the more Case #5 may have seen this as a sign of his failure in the eyes of the tutor. He was perhaps too vulnerable from her perspective, a point that the tutor seemingly failed to recognize.

Issue #6: Not Giving Authority to the Tutor as a Writing Expert

The sixth issue that emerged in the data analysis involves an interesting tension involving the tutor, the course instructor for whom a paper has been written, and the international students, who had to keep both the tutor and instructor in mind during tutorial interactions. It was not actual tension in terms of conflicts; rather, it was how the students positioned themselves with the instruction they received during the tutorial between what the tutor wanted and what the course instructor expected. Basically, they had to decide who was more important, that is, to whom they would assign the most authority. The Writing Center, in general, tries to avoid being seen as standing against the instructor and challenging what an instructor wants. At the same time, they know how the

students sometimes try to use the instructor's comments as a reason not to follow the tutor's advice, thus minimizing the tutor's role and status. When the students want to resist the tutor's suggestion, or when they actually doubt the tutor's competence about the instruction they receive, they use their course instructor as their default mode in terms of indicating who has more authority for their assignment. This is a convenient excuse for ignoring what tutors say.

This happens as well when there is an actual status difference between the undergraduate student tutor and the graduate student tutee. The students in this case do not give the tutors the authority they need to do their jobs well, as the students see what their instructors want as being more important than what the tutor recommends in cases where the tutor's feedback does not align with instructor's expectations. In this way, the credibility and effectiveness of the tutors can be undermined as students defer to the instructors' wishes. This underlying mistrust of the tutor's qualification as a writing expert can hinder the tutee from receiving adequate help from the tutorial session even when the tutor is in fact offering sound advice. This complex dynamic is explored in the explication of Case #6 that follows.

Case #6: "*The instructor mentions that uh you know, we really don't have to have a conclusion."* The transcript I introduce next is from an undergraduate, international student from China. Zhu was an experienced, returning visitor to the Writing Center. She came with a research paper to check the overall organization and punctuation in the paper. Valerie, the tutor in this case was a graduate student in English who had tutored in the center for over 2 years. While they were going through the paper line by line, Valerie found that Zhu didn't have a thesis statement in her paper. Valerie tries to work on the

thesis statement instead of working on the surface level mistakes but Zhu resists following the tutor's instruction.

Transcript 4-11

270	T:	Alright. ((reading the paper again)) *I have been interested…*
		. . .
275		*for the good of the environment*
276		(6.0)
277		((T puts down the pen on the table and pushes her chair back from the
278		table.))
279		(.hh) You know and (.2) I have to say overall I mean(.)
280		it's goo:d and it's important=
281		((T faces toward the tutee from the table and folding her leg))
282		=I think what we are looking on all over here
283	C:	hmhm
284 ►	T:	but (.2) I also think that (.) that structure issue is (.2)
285 ►		gonna be important as well
286	C:	hmhm ((C, nodding))
287 ►	T:	And I have a hard time (.2) sort of like(.4) following
288 ►		what you're doing here I think because I- because:
289 ►		I don't see that (.) thesis statement in the beginning
290	C:	hm
291	T:	And once you have that thesis statement (.2) a lot of times
292		it helps you come up with topic sentences that sort of like tie into it(.)
293	C:	Hm ((nodding))
294	T:	and help your reader follow like information that's coming next
295	C:	((nodding))
296	T:	So: (.5)
297	C:	((C looks at the tutor))
298	T:	that's really important
299	C:	((C laughs slightly))
300	T:	((T laughs slightly following her and changes the way of her sitting))

Valerie reads aloud the text in lines 270-275, and she pauses for 6 seconds. Since the beginning of the tutorial, Valerie and Zhu have been reading the paper paragraph-by-paragraph and talking about the problems of the text. Zhu did not show much engagement in the work of the tutorial other than taking notes on what Valerie said. She remained quiet, so that the tutor has been doing nearly all the talking.

Valerie now puts her pen down on the table and pushes her chair back. She talks about the problem of their work they have been doing and raises the structure issue of her paper (lines 279-282, 284-285). Zhu marks receipts and gives continuers to Valerie in line 283 and 286. Valerie revisits the thesis statement issue, which she already pointed out in the beginning of this tutorial (lines 287-289). She explains how the thesis statement can work positively for the structure of her paper (lines 291-292, 294). Again, Zhu gives her continuers in lines 290, 293 and 295 with agreement. But other than the silent agreements, Zhu does not provide any of her own ideas or responses to Valerie's comments about working on the thesis statement. Not having received any response from Zhu other than a silent agreement, Valerie initiates the conclusive turn, "So: " in line 296 and waits for a bit. Valerie is waiting for Zhu's opinion about her suggestion so far.

Instead of providing her opinion about working on the thesis statement, Zhu looks at Valerie and waits for her next remark. Valerie notices that Zhu does not have any opinion about her suggestions. So she completes her turn (line296) by saying it with importance. Zhu laughs slightly, and Valerie laughs slightly as well with her. The tutor's attempt to work on the thesis statement fails, as Zhu resists the tutor's suggestions by not responding and not sharing her ideas about the tutor's advice.

In the next sequence, Valerie now reframes her question and asks directly to learn what the student thinks about how to move on in the tutorial (lines 301-302).

Transcript 4-12

301	T:	Um (.) Is that something that (.) could be helpful (.) to talk a little bit
302		more about now? Or are you more concerned about the clarity thing=
303 ►	C:	=U::m I think that (.) the instructor mentions that uh (.4)
304 ►		you know(.2) We: really don't have to ha:ve(.3) a conclusion (.2)
305		So: I wonder if that means(.2) um he- he just wants to: ( )
306		information rather than like(.) my(.2) argument (.)

307 You know (.) So(.2) I think I use the(.) um (.2) focus on (.2)
308 delivering information=
309 T: =Okay ((T, nodding))
310 C: And then my thesis I have to use (.2) you know
311 I- because ( ) in this paragraph=
312 T: =You know (.3) you may be right about that(.)
313 that structure is little bit less important (.)
314 Um but I- I think it's good to keep in mind that (.2)
315 a thesis can function in different ways (.) you know (.)
316 it's- it doesn't have to be in an argumentative thesis
317 C: ((nodding))
318 T: So just to (.4) make it a little bit tighter(.) then it's gonna improve
319 like flow and readability (.) through that structure (.2)
320 So: I guess I would have to (.3) say that (.3)
321 it increases your chances of doing really well(.)
322 C: Hm hm
323 T: Probably ((T, nodding)) Okay
324 ► C: So if I:: had to um(.) add a thesis statement I should just (add) somewhere
325 ► in here?=
326 T: =Yeah somewhere in your introduction
327 And you may end up deciding that combine a few of those paragraphs into
328 your introduction (.) you know because these are pretty short paragraphs(.)
329 you have a lot of leeway if you wanna expand them (.)
330 and combine them (.) something like that
331 T: (4.0)
332 ((T looks at the camera))
333 Okay

Zhu answers Valerie by mentioning what her instructor said and that she does not think she needs a thesis statement (lines 303-308). Using what her instructor, who has more authority over her assignment, said as an excuse, Zhu rejects Valerie's suggestion to work on the thesis statement. Instead, Zhu just wants to focus on delivering information, which is continuing with what they have been doing with her paper. Valerie agrees with her in line 309 and 312 and begins to re-explain how the thesis statement can work and how it can be helpful to improve her paper (lines 312-316, 318-321).

Zhu points at her introduction and asks if it would be the place to put her thesis statement if she adds one. Zhu finally shows her interest in a way to work on the thesis

statement (lines 324-325) and Valerie responds to her immediately (line 326), which she must have been waiting for a long time since she started talking about a thesis statement. Valerie provides more detailed information about how to work with it in her introduction (lines 327-330) and waits for Zhu's response in line 331 for 4 seconds. There is no more response from Zhu. In the end, their conversation about a thesis statement has ended without moving into the actual work. Valerie looks at the camera for a moment and moves on to work the next paragraph in line 333.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #6. As was shown, the student resists following the tutor's suggestion of working with a thesis statement. The point here is that the student uses what her instructor said in class, which the tutor of course does not know about (lines 303-304), and as a result does not follow what the tutor points out as an important issue. In essence, a wall has been erected in the student's mind the moment she deferred to what the instructor wanted, leaving the tutor in a helpless spot. The student then resists engaging in any work that the tutor requests about making a thesis statement and insists working on what she wanted to get from this tutorial. Thus, even though s/he was not physically present during the tutorial, the course instructor has unintentionally played a guiding role in the tutorial interaction and has held de facto importance over the tutor.

During the interview after the tutorial, Zhu told me that she purposely stayed silent instead of engaging in the work of the tutorial. With whatever her instructor said about the assignment looming foremost in her mind, what she wants from the tutorial is simply to have the tutor read over her text and fix some problems. In order to get what she wants, she stays silent in response to the tutor's questions until the tutor gives her an

answer for how to repair the problem of her text. She indicated that she had used the same strategy in going over her papers with other tutors. In other words, she had developed a pattern of limiting the authority of the tutors.

Similar to this case, one of the L2 graduate students told me in an informal interview, "The tutors (in the writing center) do not much know about the core of the papers in various disciplines. Especially the undergraduate tutor doesn't understand my paper. So I just ask them to check out the grammar." (In-Young, female graduate student from S. Korea)

As was introduced previously, the way the tutor sees the student's paper is different from the way the students see their own paper. It could be even different from the way the instructor sees the paper. This is not unexpected, in that a tutor is inevitably a third reader of a paper, and one who is not in a position to know what the instructor has said or what the student feels. In this light, when the student resists working with the tutor's suggestions for their paper, it could be the case that they do not give the tutor sufficient authority as a writing expert. The tutor is seen as only a fixer of papers, not a real authority on writing, and one who mediates between what the student is doing in a paper and what the instructor wants. The real authority, in the students' minds, is the course instructor, simply by virtue of having given the assignment and offered comments on how it is to be completed. In these circumstances in which the tutor's role has been marginalized by the students, there is little the tutor can do to provide substantive help to students, no matter how hard they may try.

The tutors are not a service crew in a fix-it-shop that provides all the solutions for the problems in the students' paper. They are trained as writing advisors who try to help

the students by providing workable suggestions for improving their writing practices, not repairing specific papers, and in this regard they expect the students to extend to them an appropriate amount of authority about writing. When there is conflict between the tutor and the student that is caused by the tutee not giving authority to the tutor as a writing expert, the battle between the tutor and the student begins: from the tutor's side, not to give the expected service (usually proofreading), and from the student's side, receiving only the help the students want (usually proofreading).

By making effort to engage collaboratively with the tutor in their negotiation of the work, the students can give authority to the tutor as a writing advisor. Also, by doing this, they show that they understand the philosophy of the writing center and the pedagogy of writing instruction. When the students do not understand the philosophy of writing instruction and do not give adequate acknowledgement of the tutor as a writing expert, the work of the tutorial becomes shaky and even confrontational sometimes. While the instructor's comments and expectations are naturally important, and it would be unwise for students to ignore this input, it is also necessary to give tutors their proper due as experts on writing. It was this expertise that helped them land tutorial positions, and it is providing valuable information about writing that they are expected to do. International students need to enter tutorials with this framework in mind. When this does not happen, the students, in addition to ignoring or even resisting input from tutors, tend not to come back to the center, and this prevents them from receiving the kind of help a writing center can provide.

Section 2 – Issues Originating With the Tutor

Now I will present findings regarding issues that originate with the tutor that inhibit the international students from benefitting fully from the tutorials. While doing so, I number the issues as continuing on from those associated with students, as the purpose of this study was to articulate the whole range of issues related to writing center interaction.

Issue #7: Lack of Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

As was discussed in the previous section, the international students' lack of English proficiency can be a problem during tutorials. At the same time, the analysis of the data showed that this can be problematic from tutor's side as well when they lack cross-cultural communication skills. Most of the tutors in this study were native English speaking students who were born and raised in the U.S. educational setting and lacked international experience. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, they could experience difficulty in understanding the students from different countries, not only in terms of their language issues but also with respect to cultural differences. Given the nature of tutorial interaction, in which both parties need to engage in a meaningful, productive dialogue if the tutorials are to be successful, sensitivity to language and cultural issues is paramount.

Case #7: "That's the good strategies." The transcript I introduce here involves an undergraduate, international student from South Korea, Joon-Sik. This was his first visit to the Writing Center. The tutor, Bill, in this case was a graduate student who had tutored in the center for 3 years. To wrap up the tutorial session, Bill asks Joon-Sik if he has any questions, which is a routine way to close a tutorial session. Joon-Sik asks about how his

introduction is and shows his initiative to continue his inquiry about his concerns in line 601.

Transcript 4-13

600 ► T: Do you have any other questions for me?
601 C: U:m (2.5) how bout- how about my introduction? *And=
602 T: =I think your introduction- I think your introduction works (.hh)(.5)
603 I understood what (.2) the topic was (.2) you were- you were framing
604 the topic in a way that make sense (.5)
605 I mean- I think that it could(.2) potentially do a little bit more (.2)
606 (.hh) um (2.5) ((T points the paper)) well looking at this again
607 I don't think- I don't think spiritual is the word you mean is nothing that
608 you talk what is spiritual education and community education or
609 something I don't think it is spiritual
610 C: Sometimes I think- I think that uh I have to- I have write essay uh
611 With various(.) barious verb position(.) and (.) this is bery simple
612 sentence(.2) um berry simple
613 T: [Hm hm
614 C: [So I- I- uh I- I have to write uh comprex(.1) complex sentence and(.1)
615 don- don't separate and(.7) hmm(3.5) hm(.2)
616 ma- make one sentence two or three
617 T: Righ(h)t
618 C: *Yeap*

Bill says that the introduction can be developed a bit more and goes back to the paragraph and points to the words 'spiritual education' as inadequate (lines 602-609). Without any more opinion about Bill's comment on word choice, Joon-Sik raises a new concern about his sentence writing (lines 610-612). He says that he has to write an essay with more variety in his sentences, but his sentences are very simple. His concerns about 'the difficulty of writing complex sentences' continues to lines 614-616. Bill marks a receipt. Joon-Sik says that he has to write complex sentences rather than separate the sentence into two or three simple sentences. As he says this, his utterances are messy and difficult to follow. Bill marks a receipt with agreement. Joon-Sik shows his agreement in a soft voice as well.

Transcript 4-14

619	T:	Okay= so you compose in complex sentences //into break it down
620	C:	//*Yeap*
621	T:	in order to help make sure you know what the subject is
622		and what the verb is=
623	C:	=Yes=
624	T:	=That's the good strategies (.)
625		U:m certainly the kinds of meaning that you can make (.4)
626		increase with the complexity of your sentences=so there is (.)
627		some (.2) go:al down the road I think there was some(.) drive-
628		there is reason to (.2) (.h)try to get those sentences back(.8)
629		((bumping his cupped hands together)) into a longer-
630		more complicated sentences>
631	C:	[hm hm
632	T:	[not always but- every once in a while um (.4)
633		so I think- I think the impulse right now(.2) to simplify the grammar>
634		so you can be positive(.1) that your subject are doing verbs to-
635		I mean that makes a lot of sense to me.
636		It seems like a good strategy=
637 ►	T:	=Do you have any other questions?
638	C:	=No=That's all
639	T:	Alright (.)

In line 619, Bill now provides a reformulation of what Joon-Sik said, in that, according to him, Joon-Sik introduces how he writes a complex sentence and breaks down the sentence to make sure of the sentence pieces. That is not what Joon-Sik said. Joon-Sik did not introduce how he writes a complex sentence. He talked about his concerns that he has to write a complex sentence, but his sentences are very simple (lines 610-612, 614-616). Still, Joon-Sik gives him an agreement in overlap in line 620 as soon as Bill mentions, "complex sentences (line 619)" and right after "in order to help make sure you know what the subject is and what the verb is (line 621-622)". Joon-Sik responds to him immediately with agreement. However, it is not clear how or whether Joon-Sik understands Bill's reformulation. Based on the work they have been through, Joon-Sik may not understand clearly Bill's reformulation or he may not know how to fix

the miscommunication. More importantly, Bill seems to be unaware of what is happening with Joon-Sik.

Despite this, Bill takes Joon-Sik's comment as agreement. His reformulation is confirmed by Joon-Sik. Bill provides more elaboration about making a complex sentence. He is searching for a way to take Joon-Sik's introduction of 'how he writes with simple sentences' and wrap up his talk (lines 625-630). Joon-Sik agrees with the tutor, following the remark "longer- more complicated sentences (line 630)". Bill's turn ends rather abruptly in line 632. Then he concludes his reply by giving an appraisal of the student's motive to simplify the grammar rather than making a complex sentence as a good strategy (lines 633-636).

Bill takes Joon-Sik's inquiry about his concerns of how to make complex sentences as he introduces how he composes his writing with simple sentences instead of complex sentences. But time is up. Even if Joon-Sik's inquiry was conveyed smoothly, it is too late to work on new concerns in this session. Bill asks Joon-Sik if he has any other questions. This is the second attempt to close the session. Joon-Sik replies quickly, "No=that's all" (line 638). No more inquiries or comments followed.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #7. At the last moment of the session in his first visit to the Writing Center, the student raises two inquiries: about his introduction and about his sentence writing style. For the first inquiry about his introduction (line 601), the student does not provide any uptake to the tutor's comments on the word choice of his introduction. Although the student asks a question about his introduction, it is not clear whether the answer fulfilled the student's inquiry. For the second inquiry about his

sentence writing style (see lines 610-612), the tutor did not seem to understand what the student asked about. The tutor seemed to understand the student's concern about his difficulty of writing a complex sentence as introducing how he composes a complex sentence. After the tutor checks his understanding of the student (see lines 619, 621-622), we are not sure about the student's understanding of the tutor's question. Still, the tutor gives him an appraisal, "That's the good strategies," and takes the student's inquiry as introducing how he writes a complex sentence. The tutor encourages him with it and confirms it as a good strategy once again (lines 635-636), which seems to be a complete misunderstanding of the student's inquiry. No more inquiries or comments follow from the student. To the second attempt to close the tutorial session (line 637), the student gives the tutor an expected answer, "No=That's all". The student then abandons his inquiry.

In both inquires, the student did not produce any uptake that may show his opinions about the tutor's comments. This might be caused by the student's lack of language proficiency. Or they might both be in a hurry to finish the session instead of digging into what to do because time was up. The mismatched communication in this interaction could hinder the international student's effort to receive help from the tutorial, making it incumbent on the tutor to see what is going on with the student. They have been sitting together and talking with each other in English for 50 minutes during this session. They have been putting their effort into making sense of what they are doing. But despite all the effort to be helpful to each other, the gap between them continues. This equates with the well-known statement from the film "Cool Hand Luke" where the warden addresses the prisoners following a failed prison escape, "What we've got here is

failure to communicate."

What is especially interesting in this situation, and others like it during the study, is that the issue is not just difficulties with language, but also the lack of cross-cultural understanding. That is, the tutor not only fails to understand the student at times, but also fails to recognize that the student's apparent agreement with comments he makes come from the student's unwillingness to reveal his struggles. To do so would be embarrassing and cause him to 'lose face,' especially when the tutor continues to try to help him understand. To admit a failure of understanding on his part was apparently unacceptable to the student. Likewise, it would be difficult, at best, for the student to tell the tutor that he's missing the signals the student is sending. To do so would humiliate the tutor, which would be culturally unacceptable to the student. This, too, the tutor fails to recognize. The student is not going to volunteer information about his struggles, or the tutor's failure to recognize them, so the tutor has to read between the cultural lines and try to understand what is actually going on.

The problem of cross-cultural understanding is a delicate issue to discuss. When the L2 student misunderstands the tutor, either culturally or linguistically, it is sometimes noticeable to the tutor and the misunderstanding can be addressed. But when the tutor misunderstands the L2 student in their talk or gestures during their interaction, unless the student sees it and corrects the misunderstanding immediately, it becomes difficult do so later. As was shown in this case, the student didn't point out the tutor's misunderstanding about his inquiry, thus further complicating the situation. The student might not have felt comfortable to correct the tutor's misunderstanding about his inquiry due to concerns about his English proficiency, as well as uncertainty about how to do so in a way that was

culturally acceptable to the tutor. Or, he might have thought it was useless to continue asking about his difficulties of English writing when his inquiry was misunderstood. Thus, in this and similar situations, the tutor has to be cognizant of such cultural issues and their relationship to language issues. In this situation, it was the tutor's failure to recognize what was happening with the student linguistically and/or culturally that hindered the progress that could have occurred during the tutorial.

Issue #8: Indirect Communication Strategy

Another important issue arising from the data analysis was the tutors' use of a generally indirect communication strategy, which then created difficulties for the tutees. Unlike the traditional writing center, where tutors' feedback could be direct and prescriptive, the contemporary writing center generally does not provide direct, immediate help to the student. They construe the work of writing instruction to be collaborative with the student. In this vein, non-directiveness is one of the major philosophical pedagogies of writing centers, including the one that served as this study's research site. The belief is that indirect instruction is one way to invite the student to engage in the work of the tutorial. Despite the positive aspects of inviting the students to engage in the work of the tutorial, however, the tutor's indirectness can be problematic from the students' perspective, especially when they do not know how to 'read' or interpret the indirectness taking place. It appears that international students come to a writing center expecting, and preferring, directness in the form of explicit repair comments.

Case #8: "I think you might be meaning to say something different." Here I will introduce a transcript that shows how the tutor's indirect communication strategy played out and was problematic for the international student tutee. The student, Jin-Hee was an undergraduate, returning tutee from South Korea. The tutor (graduate student with 2 years tutoring experience, native English speaker,), Casey reads the text aloud and asks questions to the student.

Transcript 4-15

500	T:	*Um has developed along with the advancement of hydropower generation*
501		*(5.5)*
502		*In other words(.) the growth of (2.8) hydropower generation made the*
503		*improvement of the power intensity industry in Iceland possible (.h)*
504		*This was a **natural cause** because of the larger scales: of (0.8)*
505		*hydropower plants(.) were(.3) economically and environmentally mo-*
506		*more efficient to build than the small one*
507	T:	And then here (.)
508 ►		I think you might be meaning to say something different (.4)
509 ►		I- I think it sounds like you are wanting to say that it came about naturally
510	C:	hm hm
511 ►	T:	Or that it happened naturally
512	C:	((nodding))
513 ►	T:	This is something a little different
514		((T pulls her chair back a little bit))
515	C:	hm:
516		(5.0)
517		So you just saying itss came out naturally?=
518	T:	=Yes= ((T puts the pencil down on the table))
519		=but you'll probably wanna use a little bit (.) fancier word(.) choice
520		((T moves the way she sits in her chair and changes the way of folding her
521		leg.))
522		What I said was kind of informal
523		(0.8)
524		Say something a little formal there
525		(1.2)
526		Can you think of a synonym for came about?
527	C:	hm
528		(11.0)
529	T:	((T looks at the camera))
530	C:	(6.5)
531		Is it cause (.3) synonym to keep?
532	T:	(.h) ((T sighs)) We(h)ll

533 (4.5)
534 It- It cause(.2) sorof it tends to go with (.3) an identifier of what causes it
535 So(.) you know you might wanna say (.) something more like
536 happened or occu:red (.)
537 C: hm
538 T: and then that you don't have to identify the source for that
539 C: (12.0) ((C taking a note on her paper))

Casey reads the paragraph (lines 500-506) and points out a sentence that seems to be problematic in the usage of 'cause (line 504)'. Instead of fixing the problem or raising a direct question about it, Casey makes a comment, "I think you might be meaning to say something different" in line 508 and gives the student two replacement sentences to choose from and explain, which is either "it came about naturally" in line 509 or "it happened naturally" in line 511. Jin-Hee marks her receipt (line 510) and shows her nodding agreement (line 512), but offers no explicit response to Casey's comment. Casey says that the two sentences are different and then, without more explanation, she pulls her chair back. By doing that, Casey shows that she is waiting for Jin-Hee's response and tells her that it is her turn to work.

Jin-Hee takes her turn by saying "hm:" in line 515 and then takes a five second pause. It is a long pause. Jin-hee finally chooses one sentence in line 517 and asks Casey, "So you just saying itss came out naturally?" But Jin-Hee makes a mistake in saying the "came about" as "came out". It's not clear how Jin-Hee understood Casey's comments in lines 508-9, 511 and 513. Jin-Hee repeated the new sentence that Casey gave her in line 509 with a mistake. But it took a long time to receive that much response from Jin-Hee, and Casey had to ask several questions as well. Casey replies to Jin-Hee with immediate agreement and puts her pencil down on the table (line 518). Jin-Hee has not answered to Casey's request to explain the problematic part. Jin-Hee simply chose one sentence

(mispronounced “came about”) and tries it out on Casey to see if it is right. Jin-Hee asks the question back to Casey, and Casey knows that, too.

Casey does not answer Jin-Hee’s question: instead, she makes her request a little more specific in line 519, “ You will probably wanna use a little bit fancier word choice” for “came out”, which Jin-Hee mispronounced. Casey tries to make Jin-Hee work on it. Casey changes her way of sitting and folds her legs. She shows that ‘It is your (Jin-Hee’s) turn to work, not me’. Casey’s questions become more specific from the line 522, “What I said was kind of informal” and waits for a response for 0.8 seconds, then “Say something a little formal here” in line 524, and waits for 1.2 seconds for Jin-Hee’s response. No response follows from Jin-Hee. Casey now makes a full, specific, directive question, “Can you think of a synonym for came about?” in line 526.

After taking her turn in line 527 by saying, “hm”, Jin-Hee delays her answer for 11 seconds without any initiation. Casey has been waiting for Jin-Hee to join the talk and interact for quite a long time since she pointed out the problem in lines 508-9. Eleven seconds is a long pause. Casey looks at the camera. It seems painful for Casey to wait for Jin-Hee’s response. Jin-Hee takes 6.5 seconds more. Then in line 531, instead of giving the synonym for “came about”, Jin-Hee asks a question, “Is it cause (.3) synonym to keep?” This question sounds to be meant as, “Is the cause a synonym for “came about” that I can keep?” This question indicates that Jin-Hee did not understand the problem that Casey pointed out because Jin-Hee is asking if she can keep the “cause” instead of finding a synonym for “came about”. She did not understand why Casey gave her the replacement words “came about” and “happened” in lines 509 and 511. So she is asking why she cannot keep the “cause” and why she needs to find a synonym for “came about”.

Casey sighs and pauses for 4.5 seconds in line 533. She explains the word "cause", which requires an identifier that causes it and gives Jin-Hee synonyms that she can use: "happened or occurred". Casey gave the word "happened" previously in line 511. She just gives the replacement words one more time to Jin-Hee and concludes the explanation about "cause" in line 538. Jin-Hee does not need to identify any source if she does not use "cause". Jin-Hee now receives the new words quite clearly. Without any further inquiry, she takes notes on her paper. Casey obviously seems to be frustrated by what has occurred.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #8. In this sequence, the tutor points out the problem of the sentence to work on and provides the student the replacement words "came about naturally (line 509)" and "happened naturally (line 511)" to work on the problem. But the student did not quite follow what the problem was that the tutor pointed out and did not even notice that the tutor was asking for a synonym, which was already mentioned by the tutor in line 509 and 511. During the sequence between lines 515 and 531, the student was waiting for the tutor to answer the question that the student does not know how to answer, and the tutor also was waiting for the tutee to answer. The tutor says in line 508 "I think you might be meaning to say something different" to point out the problem to be fixed. The student does not catch what to answer and how to fix the problem pointed out. The tutor's way of asking becomes gradually more directive from line 519, "You'll probably wanna use a little bit fancier word choice" to line 526, "Can you think of a synonym for came about?" in waiting for the student's answer (see lines 519, 522, 524 and 526). Until the tutor makes her question clear to think of a synonym, the student was waiting for the tutor in silence. Then the student finally says something,

not an answer but a question to see if she can just keep the word “cause” that she used in her text instead of finding a synonym for “came about”. The student does not understand what the problem is in her text and even resists thinking about what the tutor is asking. She needs input that is, from her perspective, more explicit or prescriptive and doesn’t know how to respond when she does not see this type of input.

Eventually, the tutor had to explain very directly what the problem was when she pointed out the usage of ‘cause’ and how to fix the problem (see lines 534-536 and 538). The tutor, Casey in this case is a very experienced tutor and also strictly follows the non-directive pedagogy and the no proofreading policy of the Writing Center. She does not give the tutees their own way, particularly when they try to fake out the tutor to get what they want. The non-directive strategy is to have the tutee engage in the work of the tutorial. Rather than being directive and giving explicit help to the tutee, the tutor uses a non-directive strategy to put the tutee in the center of the work and has them take the lead to solve their writing problems that are pointed out. However, the tutor’s effort to invite the tutee’s response was not delivered as it was intended. The tutor had to wait for the student’s response to work with the problem. The tutee also waited for the tutor to give some answer for the problem. Until the tutor makes her question very direct, “Can you think of a synonym for came about? (line 526)”, what the student was doing was just regurgitating the question that the tutor asked her and waiting for the tutor to give her a solution. She seems to be signalling to the tutor that she needs more direct input and that the indirect approach isn’t working for her. For such a long time, both were waiting for each other to take the next action. In the end, it was a boring and painful time for both of them, with little achieved, due to the indirectness of the communication.

As shown in this case, when the tutor finds a problem that needs to be fixed, she asked the student how to fix it instead of doing so herself. The tutor elaborates and provides an explanation of what the exact problem is and how it can be fixed to sound better; however, she does not provide the solution directly. Instead the tutor leads the student to think about the problem and work for the solution with the assistance that the tutor provides. Here she is acting in accordance with Writing Center policy, but the policy is not working. In this light, the student's engagement in the work of the problem is limited by the indirect nature of the input being provided. Compounding matters, the student needs to show some type of engagement in working on the problem in order to receive more assistance from the tutor and thus be able to move on. When there is no uptake from the student, the tutor is not clear what problem the student has. The tutor either goes back to pointing out the problem and providing more elaboration until the student produces any reply, either questions or possible solutions, for the problem. Or, the tutor just waits for the student's reply that shows his/her understanding. Through this indirect communication strategy, tutors pursue 'minimalist tutoring' (Brooks, 1991), which tries to make the student do the lion's share of the work. However, given their cultural backgrounds in which 'teachers teach and students listen', for international student clientele it is difficult to respond meaningfully to such an approach to tutoring. They go to a writing center expecting the tutor to talk and to provide answers, not engage them in a dialogue intended to help them find their own solutions to the problems they have. This is an aspect of tutoring that tutors need to understand in order to engage international students in productive dialogues, and a common criticism of current writing

center philosophy, from the perspective of L2 learners, is that writing centers fail to account for this factor.

Tutors expect the student to contribute to the work of the writing practice. They expect the student to engage in talk about their writing process and work with them collaboratively through negotiation. Minimalist tutoring ideally expects the students to do all the work, with the tutor assisting them as a writing guide. By providing minimal suggestions and direction to work with, the tutor asks the student to work on the problems.

In response to this kind of situation, an L2 graduate student shared his first-time tutoring experience with me: "I came to check my grammar mistakes. But the tutor asked me to find my grammar problems from my paper and asked me what I think of how to fix them. If I know how to fix them, why would I come here?" Interestingly, as is shown in his comments, the indirect communication strategy can cause a huge misunderstanding about the work of the writing center among L2 students. Their misunderstanding of the work and pedagogy can hinder them from receiving help for their writing from the writing center. In addition to needing tutors to understand this situation from their point of view, they may need tutors to talk with them first about this learning strategy, whereas tutors may fail to see the need to do so.

Issue #9: Different Expectations for the Work of the Tutorial

The final issue emerging from the data analysis is the difference in expectations between the tutor and the students about the work of the tutorial. This issue was

addressed earlier from the students' perspective. We'll look at it now through the lens of tutors' expectations. As was noted earlier, international students often went to the Writing Center with the expectation to get directive help from the tutor in the form of, "Here is my paper. So read it and do some work for my paper." However, as suggested earlier, the tutor has a different set of expectations for the work of tutorial: "Tell me how you want to be helped and what you would like to work on. Do the work on your paper. I will help you then." The tutor approaches the work for the tutorial by putting the student at the center of their work and tries to get them actively involved with the work of the tutorial, instead of just making suggestions for their paper. On the other hand, the student expects the tutor to do work to make their paper better. The different expectations of how to do the work of the tutorial creates a problem that prevents the students from receiving the kind of help they seek. We will now see this kind of situation through the lens of the tutor's expectations.

Case #9: "Where would you: do you- do you have a thesis?" The next set of transcripts show that the tutor and the student work from different expectations in how to engage in the work of the tutorial. This is from the same tutorial that was introduced earlier in Case #8. The student, Jin-Hee was an undergraduate, returning tutee from South Korea. The tutor, Casey (a graduate with 2 years experience, native English speaker) reads the paragraph and points out the problem to work on; however; until Casey points out the 4th problem, Jin-Hee does not show any engagement in the work of the tutorial, other than taking notes and correcting the problems as Casey suggested. Casey stops working on the surface issues and asks a question about a thesis statement that can make the student join the dialogue.

Problem Pointing: 1st

Transcript 4-16

26	T:	Alright ((reading her paper))
27	T:	*One of the rising issues of our renewable environment along with*
28		*global warming is the deforestation and decrease of nonrenewable*
29		*natural resources (.1) It is very well known that the Amazon is suffering*
30		*from deforestation due to constant chopping down of trees to supply paper*
31		*and fuel for humans (.3)*
32	T:	U:m (0.2)
33		*coal oil petroleum and natural gas are ( ) depleted* (.3)
34		and then (0.5) ((T, underlying the sentence))
35 ►		depleted and renewable? (.3)
36 ►		back to back is a little bit awkward?
37 ►	C:	*( ) *((correcting))
38	T:	O(h)kay

Casey reads the paper in lines 7-31. She takes a pause in line 32 in saying "U:m" then continues reading the sentence in lines 33. She underlines the sentence she read and rereads the phrase. She found a problem that needs to be fixed and comments that it is "a little bit awkward" in a rising tone in line 36. Casey is asking Jin-Hee to fix the problem through a response. She is waiting for Jin-Hee's answer. Jin-Hee corrects the sentence and Casey accepts it in line 38, "O(h)kay".

Problem Pointing: 2nd

Transcript 4-17

39	T:	*And sometimes they even act as motivation for war between countries*
40		(4.5)
41		Now here:'s (.2) a good example from a place where you can actually
42		reduce your words=
43	C:	=hm hm
44 ►	T:	You know you would actually say that they even motivate wa:r (.4)
45 ►		or (.2) prompt war(.) or something like that
46 ►	C:	((correcting))
47	T:	(3.0) O(h)kay

Casey continues reading the next sentence in line 39 and then stops for 4.5 seconds. She finds another problem and makes a suggestion for solving it. Jin-Hee marks a receipt. Casey then makes a more direct and clearer suggestion in lines 44-45 by telling Jin-Hee to use "that they (referring to line 33) even motive wa:r or prompt war". Without any comments Jin-Hee corrects the sentence.

Problem Pointing: 3rd

Transcript 4-18

49	T:	(.h) and then
50		(5.5)
51 ►		I feel like this (2.8)
52 ►		U:m phrase here actually seems a little bit out of place=
53	C:	=*hm *
54	T:	(6.5)
55		And I think that(.2) probably one way that you can make it seem less so
56		would just be to surround it with commas ↑ (.3)
57		because that would indicate that it's additional information ↑ =
58 ►	C:	=So comma in between (.3) *here (.2) ((correcting her paper))
59 ►		and here* ↑ =
60	T:	=Ye(h)ah (.2)
61		And then=that way I would see (that) it's sorof like a side thought=
62 ►	C:	=*Okay* ((C nods and T nods at her))

Casey takes another 5.5 second pause and then points out the phrase as "a little bit out of place" (line 52). No response or any comments follow from Jin-Hee.

Casey gives Jin-Hee a suggestion to add commas, and the explanation is given in lines 56-57. Jin-Hee checks the locations for the commas and then adds them in line 58. Casey confirms it with agreement in lines 60-61, with Jin-Hee showing her nodding agreement in a soft voice.

Problem Pointing: 4th

Transcript 4-19

63	T:	(1.3)
64		A:nd the:n (.) I mean (.)
65		I think that this (.1) deals with the: (.) major issues of clarity(.)
64		in this paragraph(.2) Um I would- wanna go ahead(.)
65		and point out (.) though (.2) to do that (.3)
66		I notice (.2) you have (.2) like um (.1) a fairly stro:ng (.2)
67		emphasis on (.5) like (.2) a:re (.2) is (.) and(.2) if you: (.2)
68		can kinda be aware of that (.) and keep an eye out for it (.)
69		you may be able to: replace some of that (.) with more active verb
70		choices (.) and that's going to kinda elevate your style a little bit
71	C:	hmhm ((nodding))
72	T:	So it's just a point of awareness (.2) rather than a grammatical issue.
73	C:	((nodding))
74	T:	O(h)kay (.h)

Casey does not go on to read the next sentence. She still sees problems to work on. As a matter of the issue of clarity, Casey points out Jin-Hee's frequent use of "are" and "is" as things to be aware of and replace with more active verb choices in order to elevate her writing style. Jin-Hee marks receipt by nodding. Casey gives advice to Jin-Hee about the problem as something to be aware of and keep an eye out for. Again, Jin-Hee nods at the tutor for agreement.

Casey so far has pointed out the problems she noticed and then given suggestions on how to fix them. Jin-Hee followed Casey's suggestions and fixed the problems as suggested by Casey. Jin-Hee does not initiate any questions or comments. Rather she is just following the tutor's directions to fix the problems in the paper.

In the next sequence, instead of reading the next paragraph, Casey asks Jin-Hee about her thesis statement, which she has to answer. Casey now invites Jin-Hee to join the conversation and engage in the work of the tutorial.

Inviting the student to join the work

Transcript 4-20

75	T:	So: (4.5)
76 ►		Where would you: do you- do you have(.) a thesis (.2) and(.3) //if so-
77	C:	//Uh U:h (3.0)
78		*No* ((giggle))=
79	T:	=No?=
80	C:	=No=
81	T:	=Okay(.1)
82		(.h)That's something (.) that you might (.1) think about=
83	C:	=Yea(.) Actually I completely forgot about it ((T, smiling))
84	T:	(.h) As a reader (.) I'm kind of wanting to know=Okay
85		what's gonna be about (1.2) ((T, looking at C and smiling))
86		You know like (.2) overall (.) and ( ) you're gonna take (.1) and=So
87		U:m (.3) Some sort of statement that (.1) does that is gonna be helpful
88	C:	*Alright* ((Nodding))

Casey does not return to reading the paper. Without moving on to reading the next paragraph, she takes a pause for 4.5 seconds. Then she asks the Jin-Hee where her thesis statement is. Jin-Hee mumbles a bit, delays for 3 seconds, and says "No" in a soft voice with a giggle. Jin-Hee does not have a thesis statement. She laughs lightly from embarrassment. Casey asks her back by replying to her immediately with no gap, "No?" to make sure of her answer, and Jin-Hee confirms that she does not have a thesis statement by repeating "No" one more time in line 80. Casey accepts the answer and gives her an explanation of why a thesis statement is needed in lines 84 to 87. Jin-Hee shows her nodding agreement in a soft voice. No further responses follow.

Issues Identified in the Analysis of Case #9. As shown in the transcripts above, the student does not show any movement toward engagement in the work of the tutorial. The tutor points out the problem and makes a suggestion on how to fix it. The tutor notices that the student really does not put any work into working on her paper other than

listening to the tutor. The tutor stops working on what they have been doing and asks her a question that the student has to answer, which makes her join the work of the tutorial.

From this moment, the tutor tries to turn the direction of the tutorial to work on the thesis statement, and the battle between the tutor and the student begins. Following the tutor's suggestion to work on the thesis statement at this moment means that the student needs to work with the tutor through dialogue in which she is an active participant. But as shown so far, the student did not show any effort for any engagement in the work of her paper. What she wanted from the tutor was correcting the noticeable problems in her paper. The student does not desire to do any more extra work from her side for her paper. Through the work they have done, the tutor notices that and by asking about her thesis statement, she is about to gear up to move in a different direction. But having received only the silent agreements with no further responses from the student, it does not seem to be easy to do it in that way.

The tension between the tutor and the student that comes from the different expectations of the work of tutorial is not new. The one-to-one, face-to-face tutoring is a space that confronts two different needs: one for a perfect paper from the student's side, and the other to make the student a better writer from the tutor's side. In order to fulfill their needs, once they find that their needs clash with each other, the invisible battle begins. Both try to get what they expect from the battle. One undergraduate returning student, in addressing this issue, said, "As a matter of fact, there is a grey area. So eventually it's end up with proofreading to a certain point." The student tries to find a way to get what s/he wants, and the tutor wants them to work first for the writing process. As Cynthia (graduate tutor with 3 years experience, native English speaker)

in Case #4 mentioned, "I give them what they want as a reward. If not, I don't give what they want for free. They have to work." When the battle and tension continues with no negotiation, the students can be prohibited from getting help to improve their writing ability. An important issue in a case like this is whether the tutor is being too rigid in trying to employ a dialogic approach to tutoring that simply does not align with the expectations of international students. On the one hand, the tutor is following Writing Center policy and thus doing her job as it is expected to be done. On the other hand, progress during the tutorial is hindered by adherence to that policy. While it can be said that the problem here originates with the students in their insistence on playing a passive role during the tutorial, it can also be said that these students bring to a writing center many years of learning a certain way, and a way that has worked well for them. Should they now be required to abandon this approach simply because a policy requires it, or should the policy be amended to account for the variables that international students bring to the writing center equation? This final case highlights the importance and complexity of that question, especially from the perspective of tutors.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to identify and explore a series of important issues that arose during the analysis of the study's data. As shown in the presentation of the nine cases in the chapter, the issues that impacted on the international students' efforts to seek assistance for their writing from the Writing Center are actually mixed and interdependent with each other. That is, while discussed separately, the issues explored in this chapter here do not exist independently. They are closely interrelated with the

different needs, desires and expectations related to the work of the Writing Center tutorial. Those tutorials are shaped by variables in the students' backgrounds as well as the core philosophies and mission of writing centers, as well as the tutors expected to implement them.

Chapter 5 provides a summary and analysis of the issues raised here, especially in response to the study's research questions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

While writing centers at American universities have a fairly long history (dating back perhaps as far as the 1930s, depending on how they're defined), interest in second language (L2) writers' experiences in them is much more recent (Williams & Severino, 2004). It was in the early to mid-1990s that a series of important initial L2-oriented studies appeared (e.g., Carter-Tod, 1995; Harris & Silva, 1993; Kennedy, 1995; Powers, 1993; Powers & Nelson, 1995; Severino, 1993; Thonus, 1993). Among the topics they explored were the impact of cross-cultural differences among the L2 tutees and their native English speaking (L1) tutors on the interaction between them, and the types of pedagogical strategies that would best fit the needs of the L2 clients. Those same interests were a major part of the study reported here.

Williams (2004, p. 173) has observed that

> Second language (L2) writers come to the writing center (WC) for many reasons and with a range of goals, some of which may conflict with the goals of WC practice. Some L2 writers come hoping to have their drafts corrected; most tutors have wider aims—to help writers to improve their writing skills. Most sessions

> end up somewhere in the middle, with work on both local problems and long-range goals.

In other words, L1 tutors and L2 tutees usually begin their interactions with different sets of expectations. Ideally, they "end up somewhere in the middle," as Williams, above, explained, with both grammatical issues (i.e., "local problems") the L2 students are most interested in and the long-term development of writing ability (i.e., "long-range goals") the tutors see as most important being discussed. In reality, though, as research has shown, this middle ground is difficult to create and is not achieved often enough, a finding confirmed by the present study.

Harris (1986) has pointed out that writing center tutors are trained to play a non-directive, facilitative role, while the clients are expected to do most of the talking in response to prompts delivered by the tutors. As Weigle and Nelson (2004, p. 203) say, "effective tutorials are characterized as consisting of student talk rather than tutor talk, a focus on content and organization rather than grammar, the negotiation of meaning, and tutor questions." They go on to explain that in writing center training manuals, the role of the tutor is characterized by "contrasting it with the roles of teacher and editor" (p. 204). However, as Powers (1993) explained, this approach runs counter to what L2 tutees expect; for them, this non-directive role for tutors produces frustration and a sense that time spent in the writing center is time spent unwisely. In short, they want the tutor as "teacher and editor," as Weigle and Nelson, above, portrayed the role they could perform but generally do not.

Powers (1993) and others in the L2 writing field have asserted that tutors should play the role of "cultural informants" who help L2 students acculturate into the new

educational circumstances they face, especially with respect to writing-related demands. Severino (2005), building on this notion and on the idea of the writing center as a "contact zone" in which different cultures (linguistic, rhetorical, and academic) come in contact during tutorial interaction, envisions a role for tutors as a "contact zone contact person," that is, someone who helps international students navigate the new academic world they find themselves in. Brendel (2012) has proposed an additional role (beyond cultural informant) in which tutors operate as what he calls "language informants" who help L2 students better understand the nuances of the English language. These envisioned roles for writing center tutors resonate strongly with the results produced by this study, as seen in Chapter 4, where the L2 clients appeared to have other needs for their tutors than the kinds of services they are expected to provide. Collectively, the study's results suggest that the L2 tutees would have preferred seeing their tutors adopt the "cultural informant" and "language informant" roles.

Clearly, as the research literature shows, there are tensions in L1 tutor—L2 tutee interactions within the writing center context. As Jackson (2008, p. 23) states, "Writing centers, like all educational spaces, are sites of contestation and struggle." This seems to be especially true with regard to the experiences many L2 students have in them, as the results of this study indicate, and these tensions continue to attract the interest of L2 writing scholars, well after the initial emergence of L2-based writing center scholarship in the 1990s. Using qualitative research measures, the present study sought to further investigate those tensions by examining the interactions taking place among L2 writers and their domestic tutors in a writing center located at a large Midwestern research university. This chapter summarizes and interprets the study's main findings, mainly

through a thematic approach, in response to the following research questions (which were placed in three categories):

Differences in language and culture:

1. What are the likely difficulties for L2 learners in working with the tutors in the tutorial? Does their English proficiency interfere with the work of the tutorial?
2. Are there any issues involved in the L2 learner's affective domain while participating in the tutorial?
3. Are there any cross-cultural issues involved in interacting with the tutors during the tutorial that might lead to misunderstandings and/or miscommunication?

Differences in understanding of academic writing in English:

4. Does the students' L2 writing proficiency become an issue that interferes with the work of the tutorial?
5. Do differences between the rhetorical conventions of English academic writing and students' L1 writing interfere with the international students' participation in the tutorial?
6. Do the culturally-mediated speaking style and/or attitudes of the tutors become an issue that interferes with the work of the tutorial in light of differences in the students' speaking style and/or attitudes and expectations?

Differences in understanding the philosophy of the writing center and its pedagogy for instruction:

7. Is there any discrepancy in the understanding "proofreading" from the international students' perspective and that of the writing center's philosophies or policies (and thus its tutors)?
8. Is there an issue of mistrust on the part of the international students regarding the tutors' expertise with respect to providing meaningful writing instruction?
9. What does the international student expect from the tutorial that can improve their writing? Are there any differences between the tutors' and the students' expectations regarding what should take place during tutorials?

Themes Emerging from the Study

An analysis of the nine issues discussed in Chapter 4, which captured the dynamics of international students' interaction with Writing Center tutors, places them within three themes that overlap with the focus of the study's research questions: (1) language and culture, (2) understanding of academic writing in English, and (3) understanding the Writing Center's pedagogy for instruction. In the course of discussing these themes, the chapter also addresses the study's research questions. The relationship between the issues and the emergent themes is portrayed in the following table:

Themes	Issue #
Language and Culture (Second Language Issue)	Limited English proficiency (Issue # 1) English as a Sign of Competence: Affective domain issue (Issue# 5) Lack of Cross-cultural Communication (Issue #7)
Understanding of Academic Writing in English (Writing Competence Issue)	Student's Incorrect Judgment about the Problem with their Writing (Issue #2) Lack of Understanding of Academic Writing (Issue #3)
Understanding the Philosophy of Writing Center and the Pedagogy for Instruction (Pedagogy of Writing Center Issue)	Negotiating the Actual Work of Writing Center Tutorials: We don't proofread (Issue #4) Not Giving Authority to the Tutor as a Writing Expert (Issue #6) Indirect Communicating Strategy (Issue #8) Different Expectations for the Work of the Tutorial (Issue #9)

Table 5.1. Emerging themes and related issues

Theme One

The first theme centers on issues pertaining to second language learning and being a second language learner: the lack of English proficiency, which interferes with the communication necessary to facilitate the work of the tutorial (Issue #1); the L2 student's affective domain issue, in which there can be a loss of pride or 'face' when performance in English is equated with competence and intelligence and deficiencies in each of these domains (Issue # 5); and the issue of cross-cultural miscommunication between the tutor and the tutee (Issue # 7). Though they involve both the tutors and the tutees, these are typically L2 learners' issues. As shown in Chapter 4 as well as in the writing center literature, the international students come to the writing center mainly seeking language-

related help for their speaking and writing. That is, they seek the "language informants" Brendel (2012), cited earlier, speaks of, and that recent research by Nakamaru (2010) has suggested as well. Ironically, though, the problem that they want to solve becomes a hindrance in seeking the help they need. That is, if they were not in need of help with English for their writing, they would not have come to the Writing Center in the first place. Also, limitations in their English speaking ability inhibit effective communication with the tutors. Thus, they encounter the paradox of lacking the very thing they need to effectively seek the help they desire. Cultural differences add another dimension of complexity to this situation.

When the communication for 'instruction', which is mediated through the target language (English), breaks down, either from a lack of language proficiency or from a different cultural understanding, both the tutors and the tutees become helpless. It is as if they talk to each other through a wall that stands between them and that they cannot reach through. This problem was seen frequently in the study's findings. What makes this an especially interesting theme is that it raises questions about where the problem actually originates as well as how it can be solved. While it can be said that the difficulties begin with the linguistic and writing-related shortcomings of the L2 students, it can also be said that the tutors, having interacted with such students, could or should be better equipped to anticipate and respond to these difficulties. For instance, by playing the "teacher and editor" role cited earlier by Weigle and Nelson (2004), the tutors could immediately take control of the tutorial and relieve some of the tutees' communicative burdens. This involves assuming what Williams and Severino (2004, p. 166) call a "more directive and authoritative role," a call echoed by Blau and Hall (2002) in their research on L2 students

visiting writing centers. This could result in more productive and satisfying tutorials. However, whether they should adopt that role, which runs strongly counter to standard writing center philosophy, which stresses a nondirective role for tutors, is a matter of debate. This study has contributed to the literature in this area by drawing more attention to that debate.

Theme Two

The second theme concerns issues of the international students' writing competency: their incorrect judgments about their own writing problems (Issue #2), and their lack of understanding of English academic writing (Issue #3). As Chapter 4 revealed, these were important issues in the tutorials observed.

University writing tutorials do not have a normative curriculum for the writing instruction they provide. There are guiding philosophies, but the notion of what instruction actually entails is vague. This situation can prove problematic. Unless the tutor and the tutee have worked before and continue working with the same material, they need to figure out what they want to do and what they can do quickly at the beginning of the tutorial, since the tutorial time allotment is limited. As they greet each other and the tutor asks the tutee the standard opening question, "What are you working on today?", both parties need to realize that they should set workable, immediately attainable goals and an agenda for the collaborative work of the tutorial. The need for this kind of initial, 'setting the stage' kind of work is reflected in recent research by Nan (2012), who looked at the experiences of Chinese students in an American university writing center.

In these circumstances, if the tutee brings out their concerns and requests help in their writing based on an incorrect self-judgment of their own writing problems, it is not

difficult to imagine that there could be a conflict or confusion between the tutor and the tutee in their negotiation of what to do for the rest of the tutorial. They are immediately hampered by the tutee's inability to fully and accurately diagnose her or his writing problems, a diagnosis the tutor needs in order to provide meaningful assistance. When a problem that should be taken care of urgently is perceived and thus presented inaccurately to the tutor, that is, when there is no achieved agreement about the problem(s) to work on during the tutorial, it is as if the tutor and client are seeing two different problems to work on as the top priority. They cannot understand what each other is talking about, and so they cannot move forward without achieving agreement on the problem that should be dealt with first. In Chapter 4, this study provided concrete examples of this problem in action. In the process, it demonstrated how important those opening moments of a tutorial are, especially when linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural differences exist between the tutors and their L2 clients. The findings also show that it isn't only important to understand the need for an effective start to a tutorial; there must also be understanding of *how* that initial exchange should be managed, echoing the points that Nan (2012), cited earlier, made.

The L2 tutee's lack of understanding of English academic writing can be caused by limited English writing proficiency, but also it can be caused by the different rhetorical style of the L2 learner's native language and writing system (Connor, Nagelhout, and Rozcki, 2008). This problem was shown in particular in case #3, where the student's difficulty in differentiating between 'making an argument' and 'summarizing' likely resulted from the L1 cultural influence in which summarizing can be conceptualized as a form of argumentation, and where the writer (especially when the writer is a novice in

many ways) subsequently is afraid of making a clear argument or insisting on an explicit claim about a certain issue. The preference, instead, is indirectly suggesting or insinuating their opinions in what Hinds (1987), in his comparison of English and Asian writing styles, calls a "reader responsible" way in which it is the *reader's* job to tease out the author's meaning, not the writer's. This, he said, is in contrast to what he called the "writer responsible" orientation of writing in English, where it is assumed that it's the *writer's* job to make meaning and intention as explicit as possible to the reader, thus simplifying the reader's job. In the context of a writing center tutorial, where the L2 tutee is possibly operating from the reader responsible stance and the L1 tutor is operating from the writer responsible stance, this difference is bound to cause difficulties.

Whatever the cause, when there is no agreement accomplished about the nature of the problem they pursue, or when there is resistance to follow the tutor's instruction (either from misunderstanding the concept or organization of English academic writing, or from a different cultural background), the tutor and tutee cannot move forward in conducting the instructional work of the tutorial.

Theme Three

The third theme is about international students understanding the writing center's pedagogy and philosophy for their instruction and the issues associated with that. North's (1984) seminal statement about the core mission of writing centers, "We produce better writers, not better writing," remains at the heart of writing center philosophy today. In other words, the writing center exists primarily to assist the long-term development of writers, as opposed to serving as a quick-fix repair shop aimed at producing better written products. However, the writing center's pedagogy has gradually shifted from the

traditional remediation-focused instruction to a more collaborative model. This shift of focus of the writing instruction has caused intense debates and confusion about the work of the university writing center, which was another variable motivating the current study.

One key focus of debate, especially in the context of serving L2 writers and thus of relevance to this study, is the definition of proofreading: for example, 'what is the difference between proofreading and grammar instruction' as well as 'what is the usefulness and effectiveness of proofreading as grammar instruction'? This ties into a larger debate about tutors' core roles: directive vs. non-directive, teacher-centered vs. student-centered, remediation vs. collaboration, and fundamentally writing as product in which knowledge is transmitted as an object vs. writing as a social process that is negotiated socially through engagement. Clark (2001, p. 33) characterizes this as fundamentally a debate about where writing center work should fall along what she calls "the directive/non-directive curriculum in the writing center." The table below portrays key shifts that have occurred in writing center philosophy. Of the issues that caused confusion or disagreement, proofreading is the most highly debated problem as to its effectiveness and usefulness for writing instruction.

Traditional Writing Center	Modern Writing Center
Remediation-focused	Collaboration-focused
Writing as product	Writing as process
Directive	Nondirective
Tutor (instructor) – centered	Student-centered
Explicit	Inexplicit (Hidden)
Proofreading	Grammar instruction through talk
Better writing	Better writer
No engagement necessary	Engagement
No interaction necessary	Interactive

Table 5.2. Traditional Writing Center vs. Modern Writing Center

As noted earlier, the issue of proofreading has been an especially contentious one. During the staff meetings observed in this study, the tutors had intense debates about proofreading. Various opinions came out as to how they regarded proofreading and whether it is useful for helping clients learn about English grammar. This uncertainty among the tutors about proofreading carried especially important implications for the L2 clients since, as shown earlier, they tended to come to the writing center seeking grammatically-related assistance. As students still in the process of learning English, this was not a surprising revelation. However, it placed the tutors in a difficult spot, as Chapter 4 showed. One tutor summarized the various opinions about proofreading as 'fixing grammar on the paper without engagement with the tutee', which they were afraid

of doing during the tutorials. There was generally a feeling that, so as long as there is engagement with the tutee, they can work together in addressing grammatical mistakes. That is, if the tutee is willing to interact with the tutor to work on the grammar mistakes, the tutorial can proceed. However, if the tutee is not interacting with the tutor and instead expecting the tutor to simply fix the mistakes, or does not know how to interact with the tutor, the consensus was that the instruction cannot continue. It cannot be a one-way street in which the tutor simply proofreads and makes corrections while the tutee sits nearby and observes. If the tutor is to be a true "language informant," there must be tutor-tutee dialogue about grammar. The problem from the international student perspective is: How are they supposed to interact with the tutor, and in what way? Do they even know how to interact with the tutor?

Chapter 4 showed that international students went to the Writing Center with concerns that they wanted taken care of; they had a clearly established agenda, one that usually revolved around language-related issues. Other research has provided a similar picture. Under these circumstances, if they (L2 tutees) simply ask for proofreading or a grammar check and never engage with the tutor in the mutually negotiated work of the tutorial that writing center philosophy envisions, the work becomes problematic. Also, when the tutee resists what the tutor suggests for the work of the tutorial in order to receive only the service ('proofreading') that the tutor cannot provide in the center, the tutorial collapses. There is too wide a gap between what the tutee wants and what the tutor is prepared (and expected) to provide. There was clear evidence of this problem in Chapter 4.

This student misunderstanding of, or resistance to, the work and the philosophy of the Writing Center can usually be overcome gradually if the tutee continues going to the center. By learning how they work in the writing center, international students can adapt and find ways to work with the tutor to improve their writing competence. However, if they are disappointed during their initial visit by not receiving the help they expected, many of them do not make a return visit. Also, some will visit the writing center very shortly before a writing assignment must be submitted in a class, resulting in a push for an immediate repair job by the tutor, as opposed to engaging in long-term discussions of writing itself. This, too, can lead to unsuccessful tutorials and subsequent reluctance on the part of L2 writers to visit the writing center again.

Theoretical Contributions to Conceptualizing Writing Tutorials

Building on the three themes discussed in the previous section, this section of Chapter 5 extends the discussion by looking at the implications of the study's results with respect to better understanding the work of a writing center through the lens of L2 learners and learning. Among the nine issues discussed earlier, roughly half were embedded in the Writing Center's philosophy of writing instruction as it relates to working with L2 writers. These issues need to be understood within the context of important views about learning.

As sociocultural theorists have posited, learning occurs in Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) through meaningful interaction where the learners can practice through trial and error with the help of an expert (i.e., the tutor). A key issue that

arises in the context of writing centers is whether they can provide such a zone of proximal development in light of the philosophies that guide their practices. The results of this study suggest that the pedagogy that the Writing Center at the study's research site pursues does not seem to fit the L2 learner's needs and circumstances. This idea is discussed in greater detail over the next few pages.

1. Learning as social interaction (*ZPD*)

For the tutors, specifically native English speaking, domestic students who do not have enough experience in foreign culture, international students can be difficult to understand, not just historically or culturally, but also in how they speak and in reading their writing. As discussed earlier, rhetorical and linguistic differences between the L2 students' native language and English can create significant barriers, which are not easily overcome within the framework of writing center tutorials. These differences place the tutors in a difficult spot in terms of figuring out how to teach the international students or 'correct' their writing. In particular, lacking knowledge of how the L2 students' native languages operate, tutors understandably have a difficult time figuring out what causes the mistakes they see, let alone how to overcome them. Under these circumstances, the tutors are no longer in their customary role of being the "expert" required in the ZPD. The extent of their expertise has been reduced, perhaps considerably, thus limiting the possibilities for the social construction of knowledge that sociocultural theories of language see as essential. There is a mismatch in the ZPD of the tutorial, with neither the tutor nor the tutee positioned to easily overcome that mismatch. This is in sharp contrast to the situation the tutor faces when interacting with other native speakers of English. In

that dynamic, the tutorial becomes a much more nourishing ZPD because it is so much easier for the tutor to assume the role of expert and to be perceived by the tutees as such.

The frustrations experienced by tutors when working with international students are shared by the students. They have to ask for help from a (to them) foreign tutor, actually a stranger, in a foreign language and try to explain why they struggle with English. It is not easy to explain their concerns, and it is difficult reading the tutor's reactions or gestures in terms of how the "foreigner" (the tutor) thinks about their concern. This echoes a point made by Nan (2012), who asserts that, among other steps to be taken, tutors need to be conscious of how L2 clients may interpret their body language, especially since the clients may not fully understand all that has been spoken by the tutor. In these circumstances, the L2 tutees may rely even more on their interpretation of the tutor's facial expressions and gestures to gauge the tutor's attitude and meaning. This can further complicate the dynamics of the ZPD that ideally exists during tutorial interaction.

There is no consensus ready in this case with respect to how the tutor can begin the instruction with the L2 tutees. Tutors usually do not know about the learner's prior educational background or their knowledge with respect to writing in the L1 or the L2. Thus, there is uncertainty in terms of determining where their actual development level is in the *ZPD*. Thus, the tutor does not know how much input (feedback) is needed for instruction and in what way it can be conveyed appropriately to the tutee. Since they cannot make an exact judgment about the tutee's developmental level and competence, it becomes difficult for tutors to decide where to start the instruction and how to conduct it.

Their zone of proximal development becomes vague, and it is hard to begin the work of the tutorial and difficult to continue it as well.

As revealed in Chapter 4, tutees also are not quite sure about the feedback and guidance that the tutor provides. To the tutees, the tutors must be experts in writing; why else would they be hired to work in the Writing Center? This natural assumption carries with it certain assumptions about the knowledge possessed by the tutors. However, the L2 tutees soon recognize that they are usually experts only in terms of knowing about English and general principles associated with writing in it; they lack knowledge of the discipline-specific demands of writing across the curriculum as well as specific writing tasks assigned by teachers in different disciplines. Thus, the tutors may not be able to explain how to meet specific disciplinary demands, and in the eyes of the L2 clients, their status as experts is therefore reduced. What's left is proofreading, where the tutor's native speaker knowledge of English should be a great asset—perhaps the only one they have in the eyes of the L2 tutees. Then, when the tutor rejects an emphasis on proofreading, which is possibly the only clear type of expertise that the tutor can possess in the L2 learner's eyes, the tutee becomes puzzled. 'What are they going to do to improve my paper then?', the L2 tutee may think. To complicate matters, some tutors acknowledge that they are not good at explaining grammar rules because, as native English speakers, they have intuitive knowledge of the language as opposed to formal linguistic knowledge of it. They can tell easily whether a sentence sounds natural or correct, but explaining why something is wrong (such as the use of an article or preposition) is a different story. In this regard, the tutor's role as expert is further undermined, and the possibilities for a meaningful ZPD have been reduced even more.

From the vantage point of Vygotsky's learning theory, then, the pedagogy of the contemporary writing center fails to provide the zone of proximal development necessary for the international student's writing instruction. When both the tutor and the tutee do not know much about each other in terms of their prior knowledge and exact language competence, which is the *actual development level* in the ZPD, the potential development level becomes difficult to set. Also, the language that mediates the learning through interactive communication that is guided by the tutor does not function properly in this regard. In this circumstance, the policy of pursuing 'producing better writers, not better writing' and employing a collaborative, non-directive instructional ecology is destined to fail from the perspective of L2 learner needs and the ZPD necessary to enhance their learning. This is why, as shown earlier, Weigle and Nelson (2004), among other L2 writing specialists, have put forth the notion of the tutor as 'teacher and editor' rather than as an equal partner in a collaborative relationship with the tutee. What this suggests is that writing center philosophy would be enriched by accounting for the notion of the writing center as an important zone of proximal development where L2 writing clients are concerned.

2. Proofreading vs. Collaborative Grammar Instruction

As was seen in Chapter 4 as well as other writing center scholarship concerning L2 tutees (Bendel, 2012; Nakamaru, 2010; Nan, 2012; Thonus, 2002, 2004; Williams, 2004), the urgent need that L2 tutees feel regarding their writing is proofreading. Proofreading requests include basically everything: grammar, punctuation, word choice, flow, accuracy etc.

The traditional style of writing instruction, where there is a direct focus on syntactic as well as lexical issues, is what L2 learners are familiar with and expect to receive from the tutor when they enter a writing center. Thus, as already seen, the collaborative instruction that the contemporary writing center pursues to "produce better writers" is challenging for those who just want their writing to be better at that moment in their visit. There is an inevitable tension between the quick-fix desire of the L2 clients and the long-term development philosophy of the L1 tutors.

A concern commonly expressed in the L2 writing scholarship concerning writing centers is that the pedagogy of the contemporary writing center lacks pre-considerations of L2 tutees in their instructional strategies. There is a need for both training manuals written for tutors and training sessions preparing them to work in the writing center to account meaningfully for L2 writers, especially given the significant extent to which L2 writers make up the overall client population of many writing centers in the United States. Given their educational backgrounds, which may well have featured teacher-led instructional practices, and the views of teaching and learning acquired in their native culture (the teacher teaches and students listen and learn), many international students simply cannot accept or adjust to the collaborative, interactive instructional environment that exists in tutorials. At the same time, tutors have been trained to avoid the kind of approach many L2 writers prefer. Furthermore, even if tutors are willing to adopt the "cultural informant" (Powers, 1993) and "language informant" (Brendel, 2012) roles discussed earlier, there is no guarantee that they can successfully manage those roles, especially without training. As such, tensions over the proofreading issue are likely to continue for some time, especially if tutors continue to be exclusively, or predominantly,

native speakers of English. A shift to nonnative English speaking tutors in writing centers which cater to large-sized L2 student populations may be one way of addressing this issue, as the L2 tutors would be better positioned to understand and respond to the backgrounds and needs/desires of L2 clients.

3. Produce "Better Writing" vs. "Better Writers"

As has already been suggested, the common writing center philosophy of 'produce better writers, not better writing' (North, 1984) appears to be at the heart of the gap that exists between L2 tutees and L1 tutors. When the writing center rejects the notion of "produce better writing" (North, 1984) and stresses instead the "produce better writers" orientation, which may be entirely sensible where L1 tutees are concerned, the international tutee may not come back to the center, another finding that emerged in Chapter 4. Many simply cannot adopt the (to them) new learning philosophy: student-centered, collaboratively negotiated understanding through engagement in a nondirective style for learning. This may be especially true for international students with limited experience in the U.S. college setting, and yet they could constitute a large portion of the L2 student clientele. Those who have spent more time in the U.S. are perhaps better positioned to understand and accommodate the philosophies guiding tutorial interaction (Nakamaru, 2010).

For the majority of L2 clients, it appears that the prospects for effective tutorial interaction as they define it are quite possibly doomed from the start, an issue addressed especially well in Thonus (2002), who studied tutorials conducted with both L1 and L2 tutees and found fundamentally different notions of "success" among the two groups. If

success is to be achieved, a key factor seems to be the extent to which L2 writers are motivated to return to the writing center. With time and experience, they may become better equipped to work with, not against, the prevailing writing center philosophy stated earlier. This process can be enhanced if they can form an ongoing (instead of one-time) relationship with a tutor, who can then be better positioned to learn about and understand the tutee's background and needs. This can result in more productive interaction and collaboration. The figure below captures the kind of process that may work in the favor of the tutors, tutees, and the writing center itself.

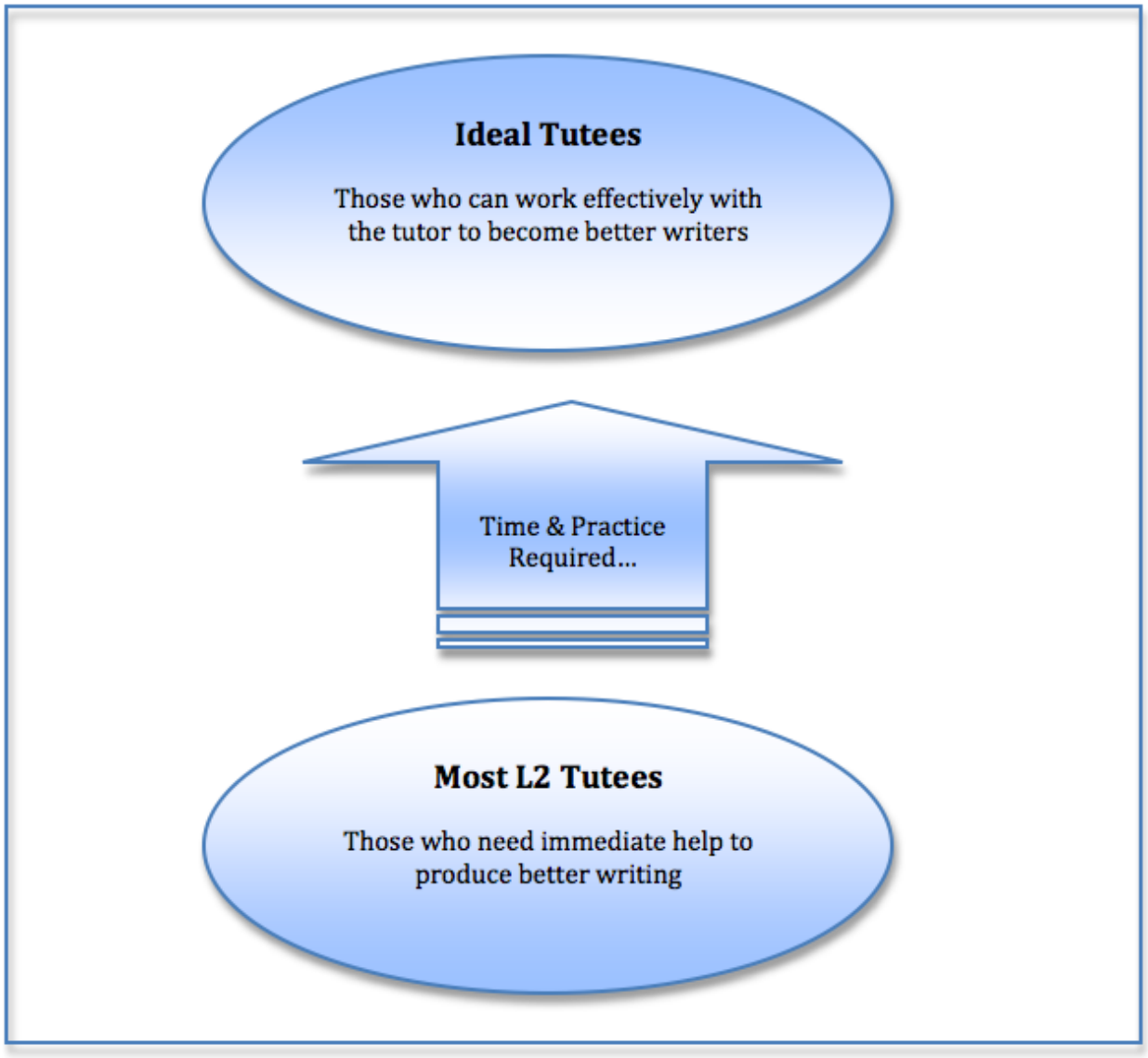
Ideal Tutees
Those who can work effectively with the tutor to become better writers
Time & Practice Required...
Most L2 Tutees
Those who need immediate help to produce better writing

Figure 5.1. Ideal Tutees vs. Most L2 Tutees

As the figure shows, the key factor is the crucial stage in the middle: "time and practice required." The differences between L1 tutors and L2 tutees are not necessarily irreconcilable; like most human relationships, the L1 tutor—L2 tutee relationship is generally not built during one tutorial interaction. As discussed earlier, using the

beginning time of the initial tutorial as a time to learn about each other and to set a reasonable, productive agenda for that and future tutorials can enable tutors and tutees to set the stage for the "time and practice required" period that seems essential for productive tutorial work.

As currently constituted, and as the results presented in Chapter 4 suggest, the standard pedagogy of writing centers is not really aligned with the needs and backgrounds of many of those who seek help with their writing, that is, L2 writers. This study, along with previous L2 scholarship in this area, demonstrates that there is a pressing need for an adjustment in how the work of the writing center tutorial is conceptualized and practiced if L2 writers are going to benefit sufficiently from that work. This shift can begin with a reappraisal of the "produce better writers, not better writing" philosophy. A more flexible approach might be in order, one that makes allowances for what L2 clients bring to the writing center. The current "one size fits all" approach may work for L1 tutees, but if writing centers are truly committed to assisting L2 writers as well, new ways of thinking are necessary, especially in terms of making L2 clients' initial experiences at a writing center positive in nature. Once the L2 tutees have gained confidence in the work of the writing center, they may become more receptive to its non-directive orientation.

Implications Arising from the Study

Building on the insights and comments provided in the previous section, as well as the findings reported in this study, it is important to look at the practice-oriented implications that arise from this study. Very useful here is a set of recommendations made by Nan

(2012) in her previously cited study of Chinese students' experiences at an American university writing center. Her ideas revolved around the core idea of establishing a productive *partnership* between the tutor and the L2 tutee. These recommendations are very much in line with what the present study has shown and so are presented here.

- *Assess Where the Writer is Now*. With this recommendation, Nan says that tutors should endeavor, at the beginning of a tutorial, to establish what the L2 client already knows (and doesn't know) about academic writing in English: "A tutor attempting to develop a course of action for a semester-long writing partnership should set aside the task of examining individual papers and instead ask the writer how much she or he knows about US academic writing" (p. 56).
- *Be Direct*. Here Nan encourages tutors to move away from the non-directive approach and take the initiative in working with L2 clients: "Tutors must be prepared to first make direct changes for writers while modeling specific examples before expecting them to flourish under the usual indirection" (p. 56).
- *Be Transparent*. Nan's idea here is that it is essential for tutors to articulate clearly the expectations that accompany tutorials, as the L2 tutees "must know what to expect of the writing consultation dynamic" (p. 57), including providing reasons for the approach adopted so that the L2 writers can better understand and accept the situation.
- *Notice Body Language*. As Nan explains, "Because there may be more of a language barrier with ELL writers, they are much more likely to pick up on a tutor's body language or tone of voice as a substitute for listening to a tutor's words" (pp. 57-58). Hence, tutors must be sensitive to how they express themselves and how they display their responses,

as what is perceived as unacceptable body language alone can undermine the tutorial interaction.

● *Engage in Meta-talk*. Nan explains this recommendation by first saying that "One way to make writers comfortable asking questions of the tutor and even begin to direct the consultation is to make them comfortable speaking in the first place, through chitchat and 'meta-talk'" (p. 58), which she describes as L2 clients being encouraged to talk about themselves.

● *Evaluate*. With this recommendation, Nan places responsibility on the tutor to learn about how the L2 tutee is processing what takes place: "During the consultation, a tutor must evaluate the ELL writers' comprehension and ensure she understands the suggestions by asking the writer to demonstrate understanding" (p. 59). This also involves tutors developing better listening skills so as to fully understand the information conveyed by L2 clients (Bokser, 2004).

Nan's suggestions, if adopted, would have the added benefit of addressing an important need discussed earlier in this chapter: to create a suitable zone of proximal development within the tutorial framework, one that is calibrated with the needs of L2 writers.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study, with its analysis of samples of tutor-tutee interaction, has extended a small body of L2 writing research that has adopted conversation analytic methods for studying L2 writers' writing center experiences (e.g., Davis, Hayward, Hunter, and Wallace, 2010; Nakamaru, 2010; Thonus, 2002, 2004; Williams, 2004). The interactions portrayed in this

previous work and the current study are crucial windows into what actually takes place when tutors and tutees mediate the construction of learning that is meant to occur during tutorials. Given the insights provided by these studies, there is a need for more research using such research methods, as this body of work, while valuable, remains small and has not revealed the entire story concerning L2 writing center clients.

At a time when it appears that some writing centers (including the one that served as the site for the present study) are now hiring L2 writers to serve as tutors, there is a need to look at what takes place when these tutors interact with L2 tutees, as well as how they work with L1 writers. Indeed, it would be interesting to compare their interactions with these two client groups, especially through the use of conversation analytic methods, as just discussed.

Just as there is a need to take a closer look at tutorial interaction, there is also a need to acquire more information about the larger picture concerning L2 writers and writing centers. This can be done through survey research, which to date has received little attention in the writing center scholarship. Carino and Enders (2001) and Morrison and Nadeau (2003) have done so in the context of student evaluations of their writing center experiences (with no specific focus on L2 writers). In the L2 context, it appears that only Petrić (2002) has done so.

Closing Comments

This study sought understanding of L2 writers' experiences in a writing center at a large Midwestern research university. By identifying nine issues that emerged in an analysis of the tutor-tutee interactions as well what took place during meetings of the

Writing Center staff, the study has shed light on the tutorial experience from both the tutee and tutor perspective, especially the former. In doing so, it has added to the growing body of literature regarding L2 writers' encounters with writing centers at a time when there are more such encounters taking place than in the past at American universities. In this way it has addressed an important need in the writing center scholarship.

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APPENDIX A

Transcript Notations

(.)	micro pause
(2.0)	Timed silence within or between adjacent utterances
//	Notes the point at which one speaker overlaps another.
=	Notes the ending of one utterance and the beginning of a next without gap or overlap.
_	Underlining indicates stress
(.h)	Indicates an in-breath
(h)	Indicates out breath
-	Hyphens indicate a word cut off in its production
* *	Notes soft speaking
:	A colon indicates a sound stretch on a word or word portion
( )	Empty indicates an unheard utterance
(( ))	Double parentheses contain descriptions of the scene
[	Left bracket indicates a simultaneous start by two speakers
]	Right bracket indicates two utterances ending simultaneously